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ABSTRACT

Parish religious education programs for children and young people are examined with emphasis on how these programs are administered and operated, how students evaluate them, and what organizational and program factors are characteristic of particularly effective programs. Nominations for effective programs were solicited from 83 dioceses, and 258 nominations were received. Three methodologies were used to examine these programs: selected site visits; a staff survey at each site; and a survey of a random sample of students at each site. One hundred and forty-six parishes cooperated in the surveys for a return rate of 57 percent. The body of the report is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 discusses administrative and program factors. Chapter 2 examines student religious behavior, beliefs, values, and influences. Chapter 3 presents student views on their catechists and programs. Chapter 4 describes parish religious education input factors that are associated with student outcomes and chapter 5 includes a summary and examines some implications. The report concludes with a listing of 33 major findings compiled from chapters 1 through 4 and appendix A, which discusses the observations of the site visitors. Five other appendices are provided. Appendices B through D include the staff survey, the student survey, and methodological notes. Appendix E contains a list of project consultants and appendix F presents a list of participating parishes. (RSL)

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A NATIONAL STUDY

A Report
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Department of Religious Education

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In Collaboration with
SEARCH INSTITUTE

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Table of Contents

v *Acknowledgements*

1 *Introduction*

Chapter 1:
5 Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: Administrative and Program Factors

Chapter 2:
13 Students in Parish Religious Education Programs: Religious Behavior, Beliefs, Values, and Influences

Chapter 3:
27 Students in Parish Religious Education Programs: Views on Their Catechists and Program

Chapter 4:
39 Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: Factors Linked to Student Outcomes

Chapter 5:
47 Summary and Implications

51 *Some Major Findings*

55 *Notes*

Appendix A:
59 Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: A View from the Field

Appendix B:
71 Staff Survey

Appendix C:
77 Student Survey

Appendix D:
87 Methodological Notes

Appendix E:
93 List of Project Consultants

Appendix F:
97 List of Participating Parishes

Acknowledgements

Toward Effective Parish Religious Education for Children and Young People: A National Study describes a project that began in 1981 in discussion between the then President of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), Monsignor John F. Meyers, and the Executive Director of the Department of Religious Education. It is in Msgr. Meyers initiative and his concern for the quality of parish catechetical programming that the project had its origin.

No study can be undertaken without financial support. This study has been made possible by a grant from the Father Michael J. McGivney Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education. In a special way our gratitude goes to Virgil C. Dechant, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus and a former member of the NCEA Board of Directors. His enthusiastic dedication to Catholic education in all its forms helped give rise to the McGivney Fund which has provided resources for projects such as this study. Gratitude is due also to the Knights themselves for their generous support.

The Advisory Task Force set the goals and parameters of the study and refined the various instruments and surveys that were involved. We are very grateful to its members for this necessary initial work.

The visitation team members deserve our deepest thanks and recognition. Their involvement meant hours of travel around the country, exhausting day and evening observation and dialogue in the parishes, and some unexpected frustrations known best to them and to me.

The critical reactors spent countless hours evaluating and commenting on several sets of draft versions of this study. Their insightful comments have vastly improved this manuscript.

The Advisory Task Force, visitation team, and critical reactors are listed in Appendix E.

Dr. Peter Benson and his competent staff at Search Institute joined the project at a critical juncture. Their professional expertise accomplished the comprehensive analysis of the survey data and the preparation of the report. We are deeply indebted to them for the quality of this work. We especially acknowledge the research and analysis by Dr. Michael Donahue and the editorial work by Carolyn Eklin.

A special word of acknowledgement must go to the parish directors of religious education in the participating parishes. Their involvement meant much extra work for them in administering student surveys, facilitating staff response, and meeting deadlines. Their major contribution to this study is a symbol of the dedication of parish di-

rectors of religious education throughout the country. They are the unsung heroes of American religious education and one of the reasons for the substantial progress that has been made in the quality of parish catechesis in recent decades.

This study is a very tentative, preliminary effort to examine parish catechetical programs for children and young people. These programs are crucial for the faith-life of the Church. If this study at least focuses attention on and raises concern for these programs, it will have been a worthwhile effort.

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Executive Director,
Department of Religious Education, NCEA

Toward Effective Parish Religious Education for Children and Young People

A NATIONAL STUDY

Introduction

Background

One of the most important challenges facing the Church at any time, and especially today, is the development of an effective catechetical program to foster the faith life of adults, children, and adolescents. Two important structures have evolved within the Church to realize this goal for children and adolescents. One structure is the Catholic school which is designed to integrate academics, values, and faith. The other structure is parish-based religious education. Designed predominately for children and adolescents who do not attend parochial schools, parish religious education usually involves a weekly catechetical program. There are, however, many variants from this format, especially on the secondary student level.

The purpose of this study is to expand our understanding of parish religious education programs for children and young people, including how these programs are administered and operated, how students evaluate them, and what organizational and program factors are characteristic of particularly effective programs.

This study is the first systematic examination of parish religious education for children and young people. The limitation of financial resources prohibited our expanding it into a study of total parish religious education, "womb-to-tomb" catechesis. This more extensive kind of research would be very helpful to the Church's teaching mission and should be undertaken.

For two reasons, the study comes at a particularly crucial time. First, evidence exists that significant percentages of Catholic youth now receive no formal religious education. Recently, Andrew Thompson estimated shifts in religious education participation between 1965 and 1980.[1] Exhibit 0.1, derived from data reported by Thompson, lists percentage involvement for elementary-aged children (grades 1-8), secondary-aged youth (grades 9-12), and for all youth combined. These figures indicate that the percentage of Catholic children and youth attending Catholic schools declined between 1965 and 1980. By 1980, only 28% of elementary-aged Catholic students and 16% of secondary-aged Catholic students were enrolled in a Catholic school.

In theory, one would expect parish religious education programs to witness a corresponding increase in participation, thereby providing the formal training many youth no longer receive in a Catholic school. But that is not what the figures indicate. Overall involvement in parish religious education declined between 1965 and 1980. The 4% increase in participation for youth in the 1st through 8th grades did not

EXHIBIT 0.1 Percentages of Catholic Youth Receiving Religious Instruction

	Percent in parish religious education programs	Percent attending Catholic school	Percent receiving formal religious instruction	Percent receiving no formal religious instruction
Catholic youth, grades 1-8				
1965	36	47	83	17
1970	40	32	72	28
1975	40	26	66	34
1980	42	28	70	30
Catholic youth, grades 9-12				
1965	35	28	64	36
1970	28	22	50	50
1975	20	17	36	64
1980	19	16	35	65
All Catholic youth, grades 1-12				
1965	36	41	77	23
1970	36	29	65	35
1975	33	23	56	44
1980	33	24	56	44

nearly compensate for the 19% decrease in Catholic school attendance for the same group. Combining these downward trends in both school and parish attendance, one sees that nearly half (44%) of Catholic youth in 1980 were estimated to receive no formal religious instruction. Accordingly, parish-based religious education may have significant potential to expand its impact. It is expected that the findings presented here will assist parishes in designing, implementing, and operating religious education programs that help provide the formal religious education that these children and young people would otherwise not receive.

This study is timely for a second reason. Some previous research creates the impression that parish religious education programs are at best weak alternatives to the in-depth, formal instruction available through schools.[2] The previous research does not demonstrate that parish religious education is without consequence; rather, it shows only that schools have a stronger impact. That is to be expected, for schools have daily access to students whereas parishes usually have access only once a week. The present research focuses on parish-based programs, examining the impact of programs nominated as effective by their respective dioceses. It views parish religious education as an important and vital activity worthy of major research attention and deserving of support and commitment.

The Study

This report is a limited and very preliminary effort to examine some of the aspects of parish religious education programs for children and young people. It was made possible by a grant of $80,000 from the Knights of Columbus-sponsored Father Michael J. McGivney Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education. The project was assisted by a national advisory committee of diocesan and parish religious education practitioners.

The specific focus of this project is understanding the nature of effective parish religious education programs for children and young people. Toward this end, nominations for effective programs were solicited from all diocesan offices in the United States. As a basis for their judgment, diocesan directors were asked to use the criteria for catechetical programs outlined in *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States* (United States Catholic Conference: Washington DC, 1979).

Ultimately, a total of 258 nominations were received by the research team. The selected programs represented the diversity of American Catholic parishes, with considerable variability in membership size, community population, geography, and ethnicity. Throughout this report, the term "effective program" is used, then, to refer to a parish-based program designated as effective according to NCD criteria by a participating diocese.

Three methodologies were used to examine the functioning of these effective parish religious programs. All three data collections were directed by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

- *Site Visits.* Twenty of the 258 programs were involved in on-site visits. At each location, two trained observers (one an experienced religious educator, the other a sociologist) dedicated two full days to experiencing the "feel" of an effective program. Sources of information included interviews with staff, catechists, students, and students' parents.
- *Staff Survey.* In December, 1985, a nine-page survey was mailed to the Director of Religious Education at each of the 258 sites (see Appendix B). The survey placed emphasis on five areas: staffing, budget, use of volunteers, instructional resources, and planning.
- *Student Survey.* Accompanying the staff survey was a request to administer a student survey to a random sample of seven students. Each parish received explicit instructions to sample three or four students under age 15 and three or four students over the age of 15 (see Appendix D for instructions and other methodological notes). The student survey instrument (Appendix C) addressed six major issues, which are listed below.

Issue	*Number of Survey Items*
Student demographics	10
Religious behavior	18
Religious attitudes and beliefs	48
Values and moral beliefs	12
Evaluation of parish religious education program and content	56
Evaluation of catechist	14

One hundred forty-six parishes out of the original pool of 258 cooperated in completing the staff and student surveys. This represents a return rate of 57%. Exhibit 0.2 presents information concerning the 146 who responded to the staff survey. Note that, in 84% of the parishes, directors of religious education had primary responsibility for completing the staff survey.

EXHIBIT 0.2 Parish Staff Survey Respondents
Persons Who Participated in Completing Staff Survey
(Figures represent percent of parishes in which each participated)

	Shared Responsibility	Primary Responsibility
Pastor	30%	1%
Associate Pastor	16	0
Director of Religious Education	87	84
Parish Council Member	6	1
Board of Education Member	11	1
Finance Board Member	6	0
Principal of School	11	0
Other	37	13

The Report

This document describes the results of the three-pronged (site visits, staff survey, student survey) project and offers analyses concerning the significance of the findings. Information based on data from the written surveys forms the body of this report, with site-visit observations presented in Appendix A. Throughout this report, the findings of the site visitors are quoted, often as collaborating evidence for the written survey results. But unless otherwise noted, findings in the body of this report are based on the student and staff surveys.

This report is designed to be useful for a variety of audiences and settings. The study is expected to be particularly helpful in the following ways:

- Assisting religious education administrators in designing effective parish-based programs
- Providing a resource to facilitate discussion and interaction among religious educators
- Helping diocesan-level staff devise ways to assist parish religious education efforts
- Providing a resource that can be used at the college or university level in training religious educators
- Serving as a self-study guide for educators

The body of the report is divided into five chapters.

- Chapter 1 examines the program and administrative factors common to effective programs.
- Chapters 2 and 3 describe students' beliefs and values and their evaluations of religious education programs and staff. In these chapters, findings are separately analyzed for boys, girls, elementary students (limited in the student survey to grades 5-8) and secondary students (grades 9-12).
- Chapter 4 describes the factors that are most important in promoting effectiveness.
- Chapter 5 offers a series of conclusions and draws a number of implications.

Throughout the report, the abbreviation PRE is used to denote parish religious education, and DRE to signify director of religious education.[3] The term "effective program" is used to refer to a parish-based program designated effective by the respective diocese.

CHAPTER

1

Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: Administrative and Program Factors

The observations of the team of researchers and educators that visited each of 20 parishes are an important contribution to our understanding of effective parish religious education. In essence, this team found, through interviews and discussions, that successful programs are characterized by shared responsibility on the part of a significant number of people in the parish and by leadership whose vision translates into program planning. As noted in the introduction, a full report of the team's observations is presented in Appendix A. Some of the specific administrative and program factors found commonly in the nominated PRE programs by the site visitors were these:

1. A positive working relationship between pastors and the DRE.
2. Attention paid to providing training for volunteer catechists
3. Use of parish liturgical events as rich catechetical opportunities in the religious education of both children and adolescents
4. Incorporation of strong social justice and human service components into the program
5. Creative, competent, and caring teachers
6. Ability to engage youth in meaningful reflection on the relationship between faith and one's life experiences
7. Careful, planned, and deliberate recruitment of catechists
8. A strong sense of community and camaraderie among catechists
9. Inclusion on PRE staff of at least one person competent in theology
10. A person assigned responsibility for checking student attendance and for contacting parents when students were absent
11. A bonding evident among the families whose children attend PRE programs
12. A positive relationship between youth minister and the DRE.

In this chapter, we add to this understanding by presenting additional information about administrative and program factors typically found in effective PRE programs. It is based on findings from written surveys administered to staff in a broader sample of 146 parishes selected for their successful approaches to parish religious education. This chapter is divided into three sections: administration, staffing, and programs and resources.

Administration

Responsibility for Program

Leadership is a critical variable in most successful educational efforts. Both the staff survey results and the site visit report describe parish religious educational leadership in detail.

The staff survey illustrates the great importance of the director of religious education in the overall leadership and day-to-day success of the parish religious education programs in this study. Although the survey did not directly ask whether or not there was a DRE, an item (Q1)[1] asked respondents to circle the title of the person primarily responsible for completing the survey. Eighty-four percent indicated the director of religious education. A second item (Q2) asked about those who participated in completing the survey (see Exhibit 0.2). Here, 87% indicated the DRE. Thus we can infer that close to 9 out of 10 of the parishes surveyed have a person described as the director of religious education.

David Leege reports in *The Parish in Transition* that the extent of lay leadership is increasing in parishes and parish religious education programs in the United States.[2] The present survey documents that nearly all effective PRE programs share planning and coordination responsibility with lay-dominated groups. Percentages for each are listed below.

Lay Groups Active in Catechetical Planning (Q3)

Group	*Frequency*
CCD Group	25%
Education Committee	52%
Parish Council	53%

Goals

The setting of goals occurs in most effective PRE programs. Sixty-six percent report having "written goals available for catechetical programming," with another 16% stating that such goals are "in process" (Q7). The site visit report (Appendix A) mentions that written goals are a common ingredient in successful programs. The staff survey results appear to confirm this finding.

Goals in effective programs are not typically informed by need assessments. Forty-three percent report that there has been a "catechetical needs assessment of the parish in the last 3 years" (Q4).

Budget

Eighty percent of the parishes studied have a specific budget for the catechetical program (Q5). The average parish catechetical budget is $29,200, which represents, on the average, 9% of the total parish operating costs (Q6). Perhaps the most important finding, however, is that the size of the catechetical budget is not strongly related to success. Not only was this observed in the site visits to 20 parishes, but the staff survey data revealed no significant relationship between budget and five measures of student outcomes (see chapter 4).

Relations with the Diocese

Nearly 70% of the respondents characterize the level of available diocesan support for catechists as either "very high" or "moderately high." Another 20% rate support

as "average" (Q20). This suggests that high diocesan support is a common characteristic of effective PRE programs.

In summary, the staff survey pinpoints five common administrative characteristics among effective PRE programs. These are:

- A director of religious education
- Shared planning and coordination with a lay-dominated group
- Written catechetical program goals
- Specific budget for catechetical programs
- High diocesan support for catechists

Staffing

Number of Catechists

The elementary level (grades 1-8) has the highest average number of catechists: 29. At the secondary level (grades 9-12) the average is 11 (Q21).

The ratio of catechists to the number of active attendees varies slightly by age group, as the figures below show.

Catechist/Student Ratio for PRE Age Groups (Based on Q21)

Group	*Teacher/Student Ratio*
Preschool	1/6
Grade School (1-6)	1/11
Junior High (7-8)	1/9
High School (9-12)	1/8
Young Adult	1/11
Adult	1/13

The ratio is largest for pre-schoolers and smallest for adults. Overall, the PRE programs surveyed average about 1 catechist for each 10 participants. We believe that this is a significant factor in effectiveness.

Catechists infrequently receive remuneration. Only 18% receive salary or stipend (Q10). Most catechists are female, though this varies by the age of the students. Females particularly predominate in the pre-school and grade school years.

Percentage of Catechists Who Are Female (Based on Q25)

Age Group	*Female*
Preschool	76%
Grade School (1-6)	87
Junior High (7-8)	60
High School (9-12)	56
Young Adult	52
Adult	54

Important, also, is the availability of volunteer support staff who are not catechists but serve to support learning activities. The average reported at the elementary level for such ancillary personnel is 12. The average is 5 at the secondary level (Q11).

Recruitment

An overwhelming number of the responding parishes (97%) report on-going recruitment of catechists in their parishes (Q12). The same percentage (97%) applies to the recruitment of ancillary personnel (Q14).

There is no unanimity in the ways in which parishes recruit potential catechists. The site visit report (Appendix A) emphasizes the importance and capability of the director of religious education to personally identify and invite potential catechists to join programs. The following table describes five methods used to recruit new catechists, based on the written staff survey (Q16).

Methods Used to Recruit New Catechists

Methods	*Frequently*	*Sometimes*
Invited to visit classes	13%	55%
Invited to visit faculty meetings	4	22
Explain the catechetical program to parish community	57	40
Have certified catechists meet with potential catechists to explain and invite their involvement	19	45
Invite people to participate through announcements at large parish gatherings (Sunday mass, etc.)	55	42

Training of Catechists

As shown in Exhibit 1.1, formal certification of catechists is not reported by the majority of parishes completing the survey. The site visit team comments that certification is a prime strategy for a catechist training program. But a high number of survey respondents report such variables as availability of materials, opportunities for socialization, and opportunities for spiritual enrichment as more central to their catechist formation programs.

Cooperation

Eighty-eight percent of these PRE programs are characterized by a high degree of cooperation among religious education staff and volunteers (Q24). It is a common feature also reported by the site visit team.

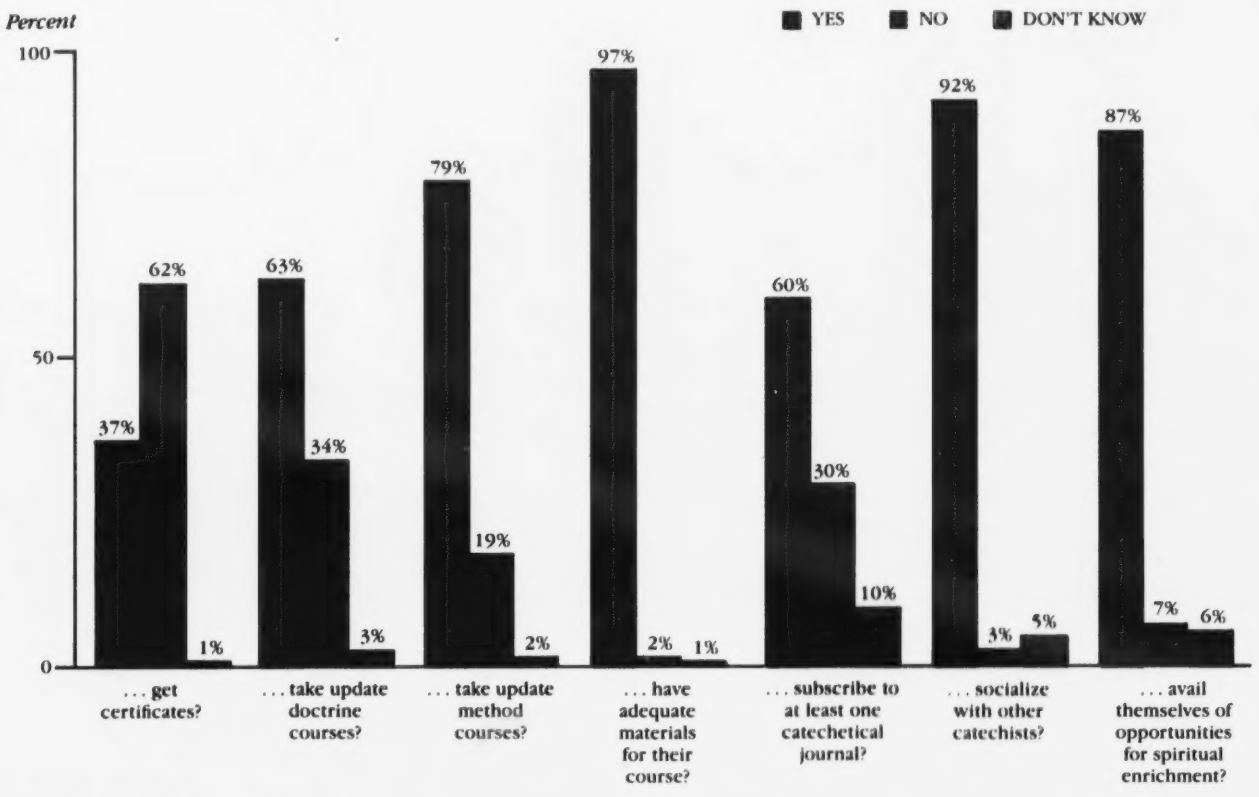
Programs and Resources

Types of Programs

While the chief focus of this study is the catechetical program for children and youth, it was judged valuable to inquire about broader catechetical efforts for the entire parish community. Significantly, these parishes which have effective programs for children and young people also are engaged in serious efforts at adult religious education. There seems to be a relation between the seriousness of the parish efforts to create a learning environment for all its members and the effectiveness of its program for young people.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is utilized in 64% of these effective parishes and is in the process of being established in another 9% (Q9). Thus, 73% of these parishes are utilizing this ecclesial and holistic model of catechetical formation. We believe this has a positive impact on the rest of the parish efforts.

EXHIBIT 1.1 Staff Impressions of Catechists
(Staff Q17):



DO MOST CATECHISTS . . .

In addition, 54% of the responding parishes are involved in an ongoing spiritual development program for adults such as RENEW. Such efforts are likely to produce both more informed catechists for the parish program and also parents with a higher interest in their children's catechetical programs.

As might be expected, these parishes make major efforts at involving parents in the sacramental preparation of their children. Ninety-two percent of the parishes have these programs for parents, with an average yearly length of 17 hours (Q8).

A wide variety of other adult efforts are taking place, with programs in Scripture and catechist training dominating. The following is a list of program types and topics in the order of frequency reported by responding parishes.

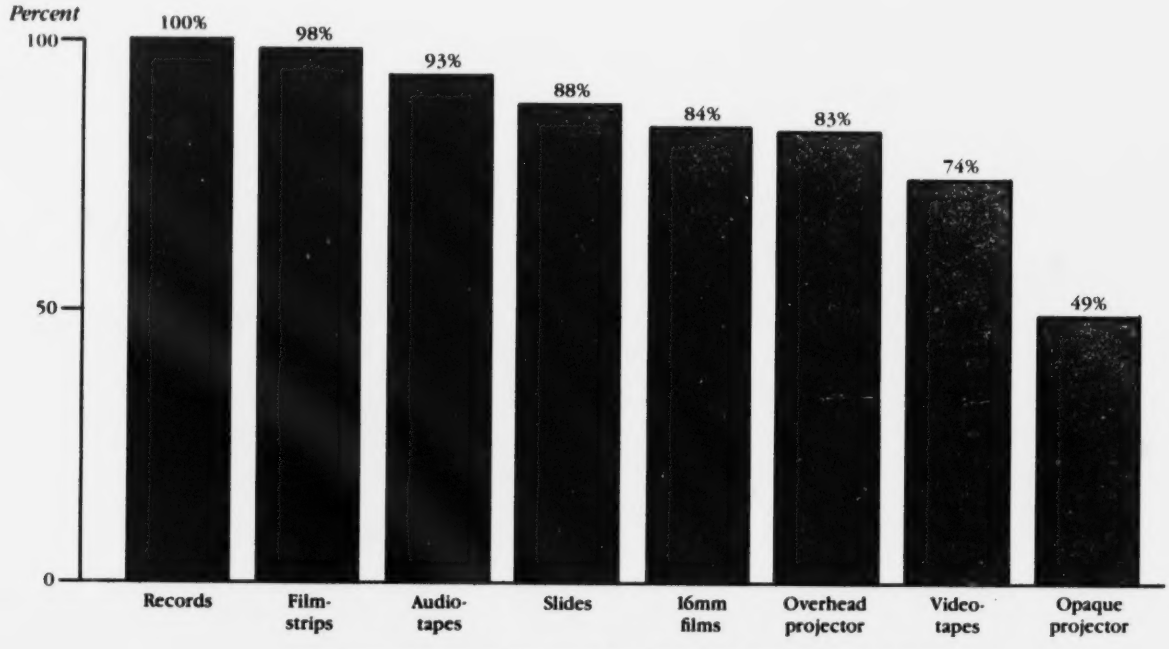
Kinds of Adult Programs Offered (Based on Q8)

Type of Program	*Parishes offering adult programs in 1984*	*Average times program offered in 1984*	*Length (in hours) of typical program*	*Average attendance*
Sacramental preparation	92%	5	17	105
Scripture programs	85%	4	22	42
Teaching catechetical skills	79%	4	8	29
Reconciliation programs	77%	2	6	104
Prayer progrms	62%	5	28	42
Spiritual development	54%	3	15	188
Parent class	51%	2	8	54
Social justice programs	49%	4	12	39
Peace programs	44%	2	4	59
Women's issues	28%	1	6	19

Program Resources

Exhibit 1.2 shows the substantial availability of instructional technology at the parish level.

EXHIBIT 1.2 Parish Audio-Visual Resources
(Staff Q22):



Age-Group Comparisons

Exhibit 1.3 gives a summary of programs by age group, with focus on number of meetings each month, summer events, regular service projects, and average regular attendance. Note that elementary school students are by far the largest group to attend parish education programs regularly, and that high school students are the next highest in average attendance. The majority of effective PRE programs have regular service projects for junior and senior high school students, and about one-third have such projects for elementary school students. Compared with elementary grades, there is a small percentage of summer programs for junior high and high school students.

EXHIBIT 1.3 Characteristics of PRE Programs by Group
(Staff Q21)

	Preschool	Elementary grades (1-6)	Junior high grades (7-8)	High school grades (9-12)	Young adults	Adults	Handicapped
Average number of times per month they meet	3.9	4.8	5.2	4.7	2.2	4.1	2.5
Parishes having a summer program	35%	43%	14%	12%	4%	6%	2%
Parishes having regular service projects	11%	35%	52%	63%	12%	16%	4%
Average number of people regularly in attendance at program	50	230	71	86	23	70	7

Conclusions

The staff survey replicates several conclusions offered in the site visit report (Appendix A). The two sources of information agree that effective PRE programs.

- provide training for catechists
- are characterized by a high degree of cooperation and camaraderie among staff and volunteers
- have on-going recruitment programs for catechists.

The two data sources do not perfectly match on the emphasis placed on social justice and social service programs. The site visits claim effective PRE programs place a high priority on these. The staff survey data are more ambiguous, showing a relatively low frequency of social justice programs but a relatively high frequency for social service programs, particularly during the junior high and high school years.

Unfortunately, the staff survey does not permit comparisons on other factors listed at the beginning of this chapter. However, it does extend our understanding of common characteristics in effective PRE programs to other domains. Though we cannot be certain that factors typically found in the sample of effective PRE programs necessarily produce or promote effectiveness, they are summarized here (see Exhibit 1.4) as our current perceptions concerning administration, staffing, and program factors that are tied in some meaningful way to success.

EXHIBIT 1.4 Characteristics Found in the Majority of PRE Programs Studied

- Have a full time, paid director of religious education*
- Have written goals for the catechetical program
- Have a budget for the catechetical program
- Emphasize adult religious learning programs
- Experience a high degree of diocesan support for catechists
- Share planning and coordination with a lay group, e.g., parish council, religious education board
- Have a significant number of support volunteers who are not catechists
- Have a continuous catechist recruitment program
- Average about one catechist for each ten active participants
- Provide for the training of catechists
- Have access to a range of audio-visual resources
- Offer service projects for junior and senior high youth

*Note: Our presumption is that the majority of these DREs are employed full-time.

CHAPTER

2

Students in Parish Religious Education Programs: Religious Behavior, Beliefs, Values, and Influences

In this chapter, discussion will center on the information gained about students in effective parish religious education programs. The survey instrument that the students completed can be found in Appendix B.

The religious behavior, beliefs, and values of students, along with influences on their religious development, will be addressed in the following way. First, a brief description of the sociodemographics of students and their families is provided. There follows a presentation of the religious practices of students and their families.

The third major topic will be the style of belief that the students display, the how rather than the what of their belief. Current research in the psychology of religion uses the term "religious orientation" to describe such information. What is the student's image of God, Jesus, Mary, and the Church? How do these images interrelate?

This chapter also presents information concerning a series of moral judgments that the students were called upon to make in the questionnaire. The issue will be how these judgments change between the fifth and twelfth grades.

Last is an examination of who the students say influence their religious development. In this case, as for each of the previous topics, the students' responses will be examined as a function of the respondents' gender (male, female), family composition (two-parent families, others), and grade in school (grades 5 through 8, grades 9 through 12).[1]

Before beginning our discussion of these topics, it will be instructive to consider certain limitations. The information that follows presents a snapshot of students in PRE programs that were nominated effective by their respective dioceses. Thus we cannot make statements concerning whether these students are different, on the precise variables measured, from students who are involved in other PRE programs, or students who are in no program at all. Likewise, this study involved only a single assessment of these students, so that we are unable to comment concerning the effect of these programs on the formation or socialization of these students.

In some specific content areas, however, we will be able to compare the students involved in the PRE study with two other large samples of students. The first is a broadly-based study of Catholic 5th—8th graders conducted by Search Institute, Minneapolis, as part of a large study of the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of children in early adolescence and their parents (subsequently referred to as the EA study).[2] The second comparison group consists of 957 eleventh and twelfth graders who were administered the Religious Education Outcome Inventory of Knowledge, Attitudes, and

Practices (REKAP).[3] REKAP data were obtained from some of the students in parishes in the present study, and those data will also be discussed.

In short, while the present study is not a formal evaluation of the effect of PRE programs, what we do have, for the first time, is a state-of-the-student report on students involved in parish religious education, based on a random sampling of students in what are perceived to be effective PRE programs. These descriptive data provide important information concerning the formation of these students—their religious orientation and practices, their understanding of God, Jesus, Mary, and the Church—as well as their socialization and style of moral decision-making.

Demographics

The basic demographic descriptors for our sample are presented in Exhibit 2.1.

Some additional characteristics can be summarized briefly.

- The majority of students have been in their parish religious education program for five or more years (Q3).[4] While this percentage obviously varies with the age of the student (as represented by grade in school), by eighth grade 73% of the respondents say they have been in a PRE program for five or more years, a per-

EXHIBIT 2.1 Characteristics of Student Sample
(Student Q4-8)

Grade in School	Percent of Sample
5th	7%
6th	8
7th	11
8th	13
9th	12
10th	22
11th	16
12th	10
Sex	
Male	43
Female	57
Family Composition	
Live with both parents	90
Live with mother only	8
Live with father only	0
Live with a guardian	1
Education of Mother	
Completed high school	62
Completed college	31
Holds graduate degree	7
Don't know	1
Education of Father	
Completed high school	46
Completed college	33
Holds graduate degree	20
Don't know	1

Note: Sample size = 925

centage that remains stable from 8th to 12th grade. Students from one-parent families have spent less time in PRE programs (52% five years or more) than students from two-parent families (69% five years or more). The overwhelming majority (90%) of these students come from two-parent families. While that figure may seem unusually high, note that the question involved (Q4) does not specify whether the parents involved are birth parents or whether the parents have been divorced and remarried. Data from the EA survey indicate that 77% of fifth through eighth graders attending Catholic elementary schools report that they are living with both of their birth parents, so the present data concerning two-parent families does not seem so unusual.

- Thirty-five percent of the respondents report that their mothers have a high school education, and another 40% report that their mothers have had at least some college (Q5). Fathers are reported to be more educated, with 29% of them receiving postgraduate education (Q6).

Religious Practices

Family Religious Practices

Several questions in the student survey (10, 15, 17, 18) inquired about family religious practices—whether the family prays together, discusses religious matters, attends Mass together, and the like. The profile of religious practice resulting from these items displays a higher level of religious activities than is generally reflected in national samples of adult Catholics. However, the responses of the elementary students in the present survey are comparable to the elementary students in the EA survey.[6] Eighty percent of the students report that they attend Mass every Sunday (Q9), and 87% attend with their families rather than alone or with friends (Q10). Non-familial church attendance is more common among high school students (17%) than among the younger students (7%).

Family prayer other than at meals "hardly ever" happens for a majority of the respondents (Q15), although this perception is strongly influenced by grade in school. Sixty-three percent of high school students say that their family "hardly ever" prays together except at meals, while only 42% of elementary students give that assessment. Why the perceptions should be so different is unclear, unless it reflects practices such as younger children saying bedtime prayers with their parents, but not older children. Meal time prayers, on the other hand, show a more consistent pattern. Twenty-nine percent of families don't pray at meal time, while approximately half (55%) offer a short prayer, probably a formal grace (Q17). Students from one-parent families are more likely to report that their family "doesn't usually" have meal prayers (40%) than are students from two-parent families (28%).[7]

Reports of family discussions on religious topics show a consistent pattern across gender, family composition, and grade in school. Slightly more than half (55%) of students report that their families "hardly ever" "get together and talk about God, the Bible, the parish, or other religious things" (Q18).

Students' Personal Religious Practices

Before one examines the results concerning personal religious practices and orientation, a basic finding should be discussed. Perhaps one of the single most reliable findings in the psychology of religion is that women are more religious than men. Virtually every national survey and most individual research reports that have examined the issue, across a wide range of measures, have reported this finding.[8] Furthermore, the degree of difference in religiousness between men and women has been relatively constant. For example, while the percentage of people saying that religion is

"very important" in their lives has fluctuated in the past 32 years, the percentage of women saying so has consistently remained about 12% higher than the percentage of men giving that answer.[9]

In light of this, it comes as no surprise that the girls in our survey report themselves somewhat more religious than the boys. Further, this difference impels a certain degree of caution in interpreting some of the other findings to be discussed here. For example, 60% of the girls report that they pray "pretty often," while only 45% of the boys give that answer. When we go on to consider differences in style of prayer, e.g., "how often do you pray in your own words" (girls 63%, boys 52%), it may be that the boys are not reporting a bona fide difference in style of prayer, but rather saying that "I don't pray in my own words very often because I don't pray very often."

It should also be noted that previous research has consistently found a decline in religiousness between elementary school and high school. Although many studies have found that religious conversions frequently occur in adolescence, it is also common to find a decline in overall levels of religiousness for this age group. The findings discussed in this chapter must be considered in light of these general trends.

As noted above, the girls in our sample report that they pray more often than the boys. Question 19 presented students with a list of prayer styles and asked how frequently the student prayed in each of those ways (see Exhibit 2.2). Girls were more likely than boys to pray in all of the ways except "thinking about some special religious person," "imagining that I am with God and talking directly," and "giving thanks," for which there were no gender differences.[11]

Prayer styles do show differences by grade in school. High school students are more likely than elementary students to report that they pray in their own words; they are less likely to report Bible reading as a form of prayer.

EXHIBIT 2.2 Style of Personal Prayer for Each Student Group
(Percent reporting "often" to Student Q19)

		Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
	Total	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
With my own words	58%	52%	63%	59%	50%	51%	63%
Like I am talking to a friend	33	34	33	34	24	28	37
By asking for things I need	34	29	37	35	26	33	34
By giving thanks	46	42	50	46	49	53	42
By using prayers for books or memory	29	27	31	29	33	36	24
By listening to music	6	3	8	6	8	5	6
By reading the Bible	5	4	6	4	14	7	4
By thinking of others who need God's help	36	29	41	36	31	41	32
By thinking of a religious person like Jesus, Mary, or a saint	21	22	20	20	26	29	15
By imagining I am with God and talking directly	32	32	33	32	39	33	32

There are also some interesting differences in prayer style by family composition. Students from two-parent families are more likely than those from one-parent families to report that they pray by asking for their needs and less likely to pray by listening to music or reading the Bible.[12]

Religious Orientation

One approach to understanding religious orientation is the examination of religious images. When one thinks of God, or Jesus, or Mary, or the Church, what images come to mind. The majority of such research has concentrated on images of God,[13] but some research has concentrated on images of particular interest in a Catholic setting.[14] In the present survey, measures of the images of the four religious subjects mentioned above were used to gain an understanding of the nature of the students' religious faith.

God Images

Exhibit 2.3 indicates the percentage of students who said that it was "very likely" they would think of God in particular ways. Overall, God is most likely to be thought of as Creator, Father, Friend, Savior, and Protector, and unlikely to be thought of as Judge or Mother. While there are some differences by gender, they tend to be rather minor, never exceeding eight percentage points, and should, at least partially, be understood in terms of the overall differences in religiousness noted earlier. A God image more frequently endorsed by boys than by girls is that of Judge.

EXHIBIT 2.3 Students' Images of God
(Percent reporting "very likely" to Student Q20)

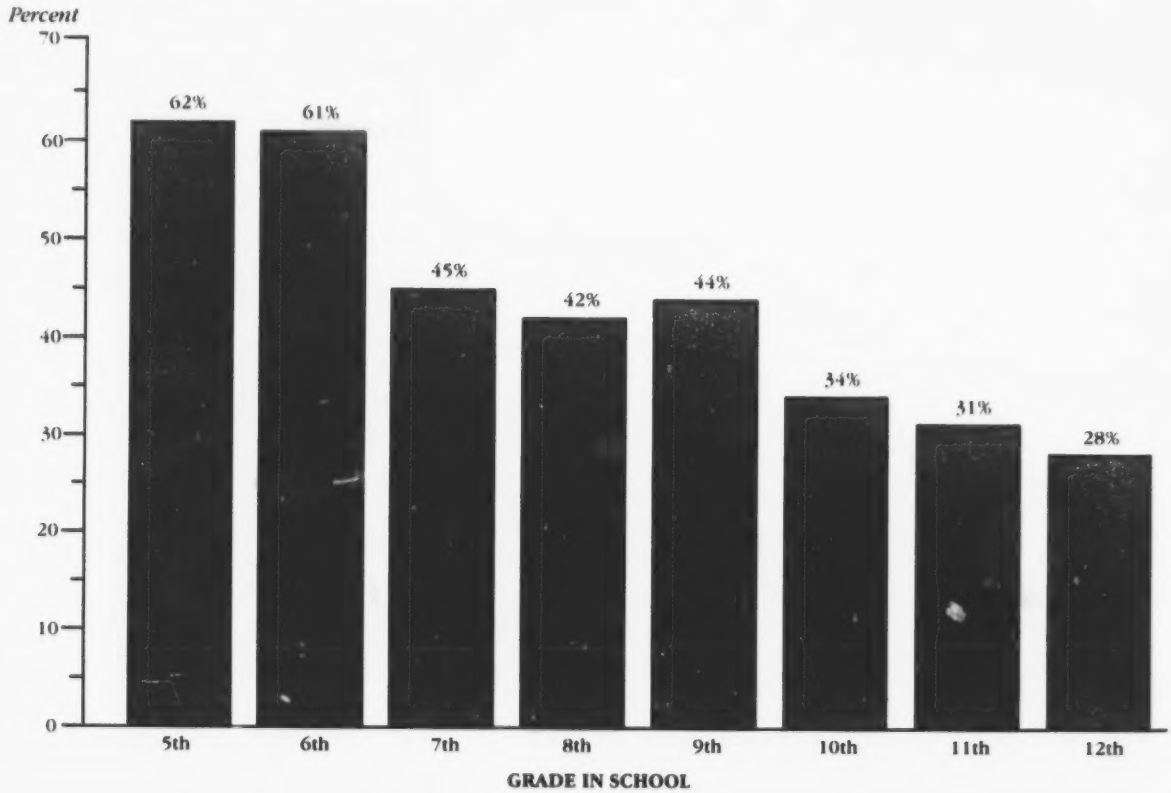
		Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
God as...	Total	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
Judge	11%	14%	8%	11%	10%	9%	13%
Protector	55	51	59	56	53	54	56
Savior	65	61	68	64	69	65	65
Lover	41	42	40	41	37	50	34
Master	34	35	34	34	38	36	33
Mother	14	11	16	14	19	19	11
Redeemer	39	39	39	38	47	42	36
Creator	73	71	74	72	82	75	71
Father	70	68	73	69	83	75	67
Friend	67	63	71	67	72	69	66

It is interesting to note that there is a greater tendency for students who come from single-parent families to think of God as Father.[15] Since most single-parent households are "mother-only" households, there is some support here for the influence of a "compensatory" or "projective" form of religion. While research has not produced any strong evidence for "deprivation theories," which posit that religiousness is psychic compensation for some deprivation in relationship or social status,[16] there does seem to be some support here for some contribution from such influences.

The only major differences by grade concern the image of God as Lover, which declines substantially between primary and secondary school (Exhibit 2.4). This is

probably related to changes in the meaning of the word "lover" for these age groups. For younger students, the word "lover" may evoke primarily parental images, easily applicable to God. As the student matures, and "lover" acquires increasingly concrete and physical connotations, applying that label to God seems increasingly inappropriate to most adolescents.[17]

EXHIBIT 2.4 Images of God as "Lover" by Grade in School
(Percent responding "very likely" to Student Q20):



In general, the God images that are most strongly related to each other are those that have traditionally been evoked in religious imagery: God as Protector, Redeemer, Creator, and Father. These images tend to be related to each other and less related to the other God images.[18]

Jesus and Mary Images

The students' images of Jesus and Mary are summarized in Exhibits 2.5 and 2.6. In general, both Jesus and Mary are seen as gentle, warm, patient, comforting, and loving. These attributes are more likely to be applied to Mary than to Jesus, and girls are somewhat more likely to endorse each of those images than are boys.

EXHIBIT 2.5 Students' Images of Jesus
(Percent reporting "very likely" to Student Q21)

		Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
Jesus as...	Total	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
Gentle	76%	70%	81%	77%	72%	79%	74%
Stern	9	13	7	9	17	36	21
Warm	70	61	76	70	68	69	70
Distant	7	6	8	7	10	8	6
Intelligent	71	74	70	71	73	73	70
Demanding	7	7	7	8	6	4	9
Patient	79	75	82	79	80	80	78
Irrelevant	3	4	3	3	8	5	3
Challenging	20	20	20	19	26	18	21
Comforting	73	66	78	72	79	77	70
Unimportant	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
Loving	86	81	89	86	85	90	83

EXHIBIT 2.6 Students' Images of Mary
(Percent reporting "very likely" to Student Q22)

		Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
Mary as...	Total	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
Gentle	89%	87%	91%	89%	91%	91%	88%
Stern	7	8	6	7	7	5	8
Warm	82	77	85	82	80	84	80
Distant	7	6	7	7	7	7	7
Intelligent	52	50	54	52	54	59	47
Demanding	4	5	2	4	3	5	3
Patient	79	75	83	79	85	83	77
Irrelevant	5	6	3	4	8	6	4
Challenging	11	12	10	10	18	13	10
Comforting	79	77	81	79	80	82	78
Unimportant	3	3	2	3	6	3	3
Loving	91	89	92	91	91	94	89

Interestingly, the students' images of Mary and Jesus tended to be rather strongly correlated; if Jesus was seen as loving or demanding or stern, Mary was likely to be seen the same way. Most strongly related were the attributes of irrelevance and unimportance; those who rejected (or accepted) those labels for one, likewise rejected (or accepted) those labels for the other. On the other hand, relatively little relation occurs between the students' images of Jesus and Mary and their images of God, or their images of the Church.

Church Images

One of the findings concerning Church images is that they tend not to be nearly so strong as images of religious figures such as God and Mary. The Church is an ongoing organization of members whose faults and foibles, strengths and virtues help produce the image of the Church that each individual has. This may account for the fact that no particular image is endorsed by more than 69% of the students. Exhibit 2.7 further shows that the image of the Church as "helpful" is rated highest. Other images endorsed by at least half of the respondents are "open to women," "against nuclear war," "a close family," and "tries hard." The Church is very unlikely to be seen as "distant" or "opposed to other churches."

EXHIBIT 2.7 Students' Images of the Catholic Church
(Percent reporting "very likely" to Student Q23)

		Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
Catholic Church as...	Total	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
The true church	49%	51%	48%	50%	43%	59%	43%
Challenging	20	21	18	19	25	19	20
Judgmental	20	22	19	20	25	15	24
Helpful to others	69	67	71	70	66	78	63
Tries hard	55	55	56	55	56	61	51
Distant	6	6	5	5	6	6	5
Against nuclear war	56	58	54	58	38	57	55
Open to women	57	61	53	56	58	67	50
A close family	56	53	57	55	62	67	48
Run by priests	44	45	43	44	43	44	44
Opposed to other churches	6	6	6	6	5	8	4

Closeness to Church, God, and Parish

Students were asked how close they feel to their Church, their God, and their parish. Their responses to these somewhat global questions reflect some of the decline in religiousness so frequently noted across this portion of the lifespan, and displayed, for example, in the EA study.

Closeness to the Church, God, and the Parish by Grade in School
(Percent "Very Close" or "Close," Student Q24-26)

	Grade							
	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Church	58%	64%	57%	53%	41%	46%	50%	41%
God	81	84	78	72	63	69	72	67
Parish	46	56	46	45	38	39	39	40

Religious Knowledge

A national study of the knowledge-effectiveness of a significant number of parish programs was published by NCEA in 1982 in a publication entitled *That They May Know You*. Accordingly, the present study did not include extensive treatment of this important area.

In order, however, to obtain some comparison between the students in this earlier study and the students in the present study, the site visitors administered the REKAP instrument in five of the visited parishes.

The REKAP is a measure of religious knowledge, attitudes, and practices. The knowledge component is broken down into four subscales: Christian doctrine, Christian life, sacred scripture, and religious terminology.[22] The table below presents the scores on these subscales for the five parishes tested and for a sample of 957 other eleventh and twelfth graders who took the test up to 1980-81.

Scores on REKAP Subscales (Percent Correct)

	Christian Doctrine	*Christian Life*	*Sacred Scripture*	*Religious Terms*
Five PRE Parishes	63%	66	64	62
National PRE Averages	59	65	61	59

In order to show the flavor of the items included on the REKAP measure, sample items from each of these subscales and the effective and national sample PRE scores on those items are shown in Exhibit 2.8.

While the national averages are based on a convenience sample of a large number of Catholic youth who were in PRE programs, the PRE parish sample of effective programs is very small for the purposes of comparison, and the range of scores that underlie the means shown is considerable. Note, however, that any differences between the two groups are rather small. Students in the five effective PRE programs chosen for testing are not really any more knowledgeable than those in PRE programs in general.

These data are only the smallest beginning toward addressing the question of the knowledge-effectiveness of PRE programs. If, as seems inevitable from current trends, the percentage of young Catholics receiving their instruction in parish settings continues to grow, then it is crucial to the future of Catholic religious education that an in-depth study of the impact of these programs on religious knowledge be carried out. We shall return to this issue in chapter 3, as we discuss student perceptions of course content.

Students' Moral Values

Questions 27 and 28 presented the students with a series of situations in which individuals had taken an action reflecting their ethical stand on a particular issue. The complete texts of these scenarios are available in Appendix B. Exhibits 2.9 and 2.10 report the students' reactions to these situations.

Exhibit 2.9 can be briefly discussed. Except in the case of reporting a theft, at least 85% of the 5th through 8th grade students gave the preferred answer throughout, and most of those not responding in the way expected were undecided. The exception is the reporting of a theft. Here a consistent 15% were undecided, and it might be inter-

EXHIBIT 2.8 Scores on Sample REKAP Items
(Percentage correct)

	Effective PRE (N=86)	National PRE (N=957)
Christian Doctrine		
Which of the following is a Sacrament of Initiation? ... Confirmation. (#4)	66	63
The Church honors Mary, the Mother of Jesus, primarily for her... response in faith to God's call. (#15)	70	62
Christian Life		
Members of religious orders and congregations are distinguished from other Christians in that they... follow God's call according to a common rule. (#12)	59	65
What is the Catholic belief about the judgment of God in the case of a person who commits suicide? ... God judges us by the whole of our lives including individual acts and circumstances. (#16)	61	55
Sacred Scripture		
Why were several Gospels written instead of only one? ... Different Gospels were written for different communities. (#7)	34	29
"In the beginning was the Word ... and the Word became flesh." These words from St. John's gospel remind us that ... Jesus is both God and man. (#20)	75	76
Religious Terms		
The Son of God becoming a man ... Incarnation. (#32)	63	41
The special teaching authority of the bishops and the pope ... The magisterium. (#51)	30	27

esting in the future to probe why. Are they in fact observing a code of silence? Do they think it is better to confront the student who did the stealing ("I saw what you did and you better put it back before we all get in trouble!")? Or do they want to know more about the circumstances (maybe Linda really needs the money because her family is poor)? Would the students have been more likely to report the incident if the thief had been a boy? Since all these issues would influence responses, the question seems ripe for further exploration.

The elementary school students who are involved in parish religious education programs display notably stricter moral standards than did the sample of 5th through 8th graders in Catholic elementary schools in the EA survey. Given the same situations, here is how the two groups differed.

Percentage of Students Labeling an Action Wrong or very wrong

Action	*PRE 5th-8th Graders*	*Nationwide EA Sample*
Ignore Teacher	94%	84%
Shoplift	97	91
Lie About Homework	90	83
Drink Beer	86	74

EXHIBIT 2.9 5th through 8th Graders' Ratings of Various Actions
(Student Q27)

		Gender		Family Composition	
	Average	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent
Ignore teacher					
Very Right, Right	3%	5%	1%	3%	7%
Very Wrong, Wrong	94	91	95	93	91
Shoplift radio					
Very Right, Right	1	1	1	1	5
Very Wrong, Wrong	97	96	98	97	96
Report theft					
Very Right, Right	82	78	82	80	84
Very Wrong, Wrong	5	5	6	5	5
Lie about homework					
Very Right, Right	2	1	3	4	2
Very Wrong, Wrong	90	91	88	87	97
Drink beer at age 13					
Very Right, Right	3	3	2	4	4
Very Wrong, Wrong	86	84	87	85	84
Segregated housing					
Very Right, Right	2	1	2	2	5
Very Wrong, Wrong	95	94	95	95	91

EXHIBIT 2.10 9th through 12th Graders' Ratings of Various Actions
(Student Q28)

		Gender		Family Composition	
	Average	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent
Shoflift radio					
Very Right, Right	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Very Wrong, Wrong	98	97	98	98	94
Lie about homework					
Very Right, Right	4	5	4	5	4
Very Wrong, Wrong	80	76	84	79	86
Abortion at age 15					
Very Right, Right	9	9	8	10	8
Very Wrong, Wrong	66	62	69	66	51
Drink beer at age 13					
Very Right, Right	12	13	12	13	12
Very Wrong, Wrong	56	51	60	55	56
Intercourse at age 15					
Very Right, Right	12	13	10	11	19
Very Wrong, Wrong	53	48	58	55	43
Nuclear bombing of cities					
Very Right, Right	5	7	4	6	8
Very Wrong, Wrong	82	80	85	82	87

In addressing these moral dilemmas (Exhibit 2.10), the high school students show the same rejection of shoplifting as the younger students but are considerably more undecided on the "homework" and "beer" questions. For example, they are not much more likely to say that lying about homework is right, but they are more likely to be undecided. They are more likely to say that drinking beer at 13 is right, but nearly a third are undecided on that issue. A similar proportion is undecided about abortion and premarital intercourse.

The situations presented in Exhibit 2.10 also show differences between groups of respondents. Boys are less likely to condemn premarital intercourse than are girls.[23] Of special interest are the differences on those items by family composition. In both cases, students from single-parent families apparently have more permissive sexual standards than do the students from two-parent families. But given the small number of single-parent high school students, these differences cannot be considered reliable.

Influences on Religious Thinking and Identity

Influences on Religious Thinking

In order to investigate what persons and experiences influenced the way the students "think about religion and the Catholic faith," students were presented with a series of questions (Q91-105) concerning how much impact each of a series of sources had had on their faith development. The findings from these questions are displayed in Exhibit 2.11.

EXHIBIT 2.11 Influences on Religious Thinking
(Percent "Very Much")

		Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
	Total	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
Mother	50%	47%	52%	50%	49%	57%	45%
Personal experiences	37	34	39	38	31	31	42
Father	35	34	36	36	24	40	32
Priest, brother, or sister	24	23	25	24	27	30	21
Retreats, encounter groups, or prayer groups	22	21	23	22	22	11	30
Grandparents	22	19	25	21	30	32	16
Homilies	21	18	22	20	22	27	16
Classes in Catholic School	21	20	21	20	26	25	18
PRE classes	18	18	19	18	24	22	16
A certain catechist	18	15	20	18	19	23	14
Friends	17	14	18	16	20	16	17
Own reading	16	14	18	16	22	24	12
Siblings	15	13	16	15	18	20	12
A certain school teacher	14	13	14	13	16	16	12
Religious movies or TV	9	7	11	9	12	13	7

At the level of group means, we find that religious influences fall into four broad categories. First, and in a category all her own, is mother, the strongest influence on all groups, with 50% of respondents reporting that she influenced their faith "very much." The next influences, reported by between 30 and 40 percent of respondents, are: "personal experiences" and "father." Not surprisingly, the influence of father is lowest in single-parent families, and father is a stronger influence than personal experience for elementary school students, while the reverse is true for high school students.

A third category consists of all but one of the remaining options listed in the questionnaire and, at the level of grand means, is claimed as an influence by between 24 and 14 percent of the respondents. This includes all the remaining familial influences and the educational sources: Catholic school, PRE classes, homilies, and the like. Notable differences occur among these influences by grade in school. High school students are much more likely than elementary students to report being influenced by retreats and less likely to report being influenced by family members, or their own reading.

The tendency for high school students to be more likely than elementary school students to rate retreats as an important influence in their faith development is, at least in part, a reflection of the fact that retreats are more common in high schools than in elementary schools. But it also reflects a re-ordering of the importance of faith influences by high school students. As is clear from Exhibit 2.11, three in ten high school students indicate that retreats have influenced their faith life "very much," an impact exceeded only by their parents and their personal experiences. Retreats, the opportunity for high school students to experience religious community with their peers in a setting that they can claim as their own (at least for a brief time) and in a manner directed to their unique concerns and stage of faith development, are a powerful influence. They are all the more powerful when one considers that these single, or relatively infrequent, events, are rated nearly as important as the on-going relationships with parents, and the students own on-going life experiences.

As was noted by the site visitors and reported in Appendix A, the impact of these experiences can be attested to by nearly all religious educators. A well-run retreat is a spiritual "high" and a profound and personally moving experience for everyone involved. And even when those running a retreat come home discouraged, wondering what their students could possibly have taken away from a weekend where everything seemed to go wrong, they are frequently "surprised by joy" as parents call them to report the profound effect that the weekend has had (at least temporarily) on their offspring. High school retreats, if they are not already available to students in other ways, should be a part of every PRE program.

The fourth category of influences on faith development, endorsed by only 10% of the students, is that of media: "religious movies or TV programs I have seen." The fact that this is much less likely than any of the other sources to be rated as a strong influence can be seen as either good or bad. It can be considered good if it is an indication that "televangelists" and similar religious broadcasting, which present theologies often explicitly at odds with Catholic theology, are apparently not a major influence on students who attend PRE programs. But it is bad to the extent that it indicates that Catholics have not stepped forward with broadcasting and other media presentations of sufficient quality to be a major impact on the faith life of these students.

Influences on "Being Catholic"

A final series of questions (Q106-110) offered the students a list of five possible "reasons for being Catholic," and asked how important each one was "to you personally." These reasons, and the percentage of students responding that each was "very important," are shown in Exhibit 2.12.

EXHIBIT 2.12 Reasons for Being Catholic
(Percent "Very Important"

	Total	Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
		Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
Infant baptism	73%	71%	74%	73%	71%	81%	67%
Parental affiliation	49	44	53	49	48	55	45
Like Catholic values	49	50	48	49	49	56	44
Being Catholic gives a sense of identity	45	42	46	46	37	47	44
Going to Mass is best form of worship	43	44	43	44	31	54	36

The fact that they were baptized as infants is rated very important by at least two-thirds of all categories of respondents, and the remaining four influences are rated very important by approximately 50% of the students. Notable differences in responses are present in one case. High school students, probably as a reflection of a general disaffection from religion, are less likely to rate four of the five categories as "very important." The one exception, however, is very interesting. High school students are nearly as likely as elementary students to say that "providing a sense of identity" is very important to them. Furthermore, this sense of identity is as important for the high school students as is parental affiliation and Catholic values, and more important than the Mass as a form of worship. Perhaps this reflects the presence of a quasi-ethnic identification with Catholicism that will be expressed in later life as an extrinsic religiousness, characterized by infrequent church attendance and only nominal identification with the faith.[24]

Conclusions

There are few surprises in this chapter. High school students consider themselves less religious than elementary school students; boys are less religious than girls. Family religious practices, even in the families of the students attending these PRE programs, seem to be relatively infrequent. The images of God, Jesus, and Mary that the students hold are generally those that reflect traditional Church teachings. Students' moral values change from elementary school to high school, but predominantly in the direction of greater uncertainty rather than outright rejection of Church teaching. Perhaps the most intriguing finding is the continued importance of "Catholic identity" among high school students while all other "reasons for being Catholic" decline in importance. Do these students go on simply to become extrinsic and uninvolved religionists, or are they the Catholics most likely to become "returnees,"[25] returning to active participation in later years? Addressing this question would be difficult but would result in considerable insight into the nature of faith development.

CHAPTER

3

Students in Parish Religious Education Programs: Views on Their Catechists and Programs

What do students think about their parish religious education programs? This chapter examines the question in several ways: how students view their catechist, what they think about the various educational resources and activities used in their programs, and their opinion regarding program content. Also included is an analysis of two open-ended questions concerning whether there was anything the program had left out, and whether there was anything in particular that could be done to make PRE programs "as good as they can be."

Views on Catechists

Several studies of the impact of education have pointed to the importance of individual teachers on student orientation toward learning. In this sample, approximately one in five (18%) of the students says that "a certain catechist" influenced "very much" the way he or she now thinks about religion (Q104).[1] Even the best planned programs and materials cannot be effective in the hands of a poor catechist. Conversely, a good teacher can go a long way toward overcoming a deficit in resources. It is not surprising, therefore, that considerable effort was spent in the student survey to determine the nature of the catechist's relation to the students.

Question 30 in the survey asked students to rate certain aspects of their PRE program. Two of these aspects concerned catechists: their attitude and their presentations. Since ratings for these questions do not vary by group (gender, family composition, grade), the percentages presented are for all students responding.

Students' Overall Rating of Catechist

	Attitude	*Presentations*
Excellent	40%	23%
Good	43	45
Fair	12	22
Poor	4	6
Not Applicable	1	4

Two characteristics of these ratings are noteworthy. First, the 40% "excellent" rating for attitude was the highest "excellent" rating of any of the items in question 30, surpassing even "group activities." Second, the fact that 1% of the respondents listed the catechist's attitude as "not applicable," and 4% gave that rating to the catechist's presentation may reflect failure to understand the word "catechist," which was not defined in the questionnaire.

EXHIBIT 3.1 Ratings of Catechist
(Student Q31-34, 36, 38-40)

		Gender		Family Composition		Grades	
	Total	Male	Female	2 Parent	1 Parent	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
My catechist really understands me							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	52%	51%	53%	52%	53%	56%	50%
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	18	17	18	18	19	12	22
Challenges me to think about being Catholic							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	70	71	70	71	71	69	71
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	9	9	10	10	7	9	9
Does not know what it's like to be my age							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	31	33	30	31	42	34	30
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	45	44	46	46	40	40	48
Has high expectations for program							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	58	58	58	59	56	59	59
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	15	12	15	13	19	14	14
Likes me and my friends							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	80	82	79	80	85	80	81
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	5	4	7	5	4	6	5
Tries to keep in touch outside of class							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	36	41	33	37	36	33	39
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	41	37	44	41	44	42	40
Tries to be aware of my home life							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	43	44	42	42	50	47	41
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	28	27	30	29	29	28	28
Is not enthusiastic							
Agree strongly, Somewhat	13	11	13	11	19	17	10
Disagree strongly, Somewhat	73	65	72	73	71	62	80

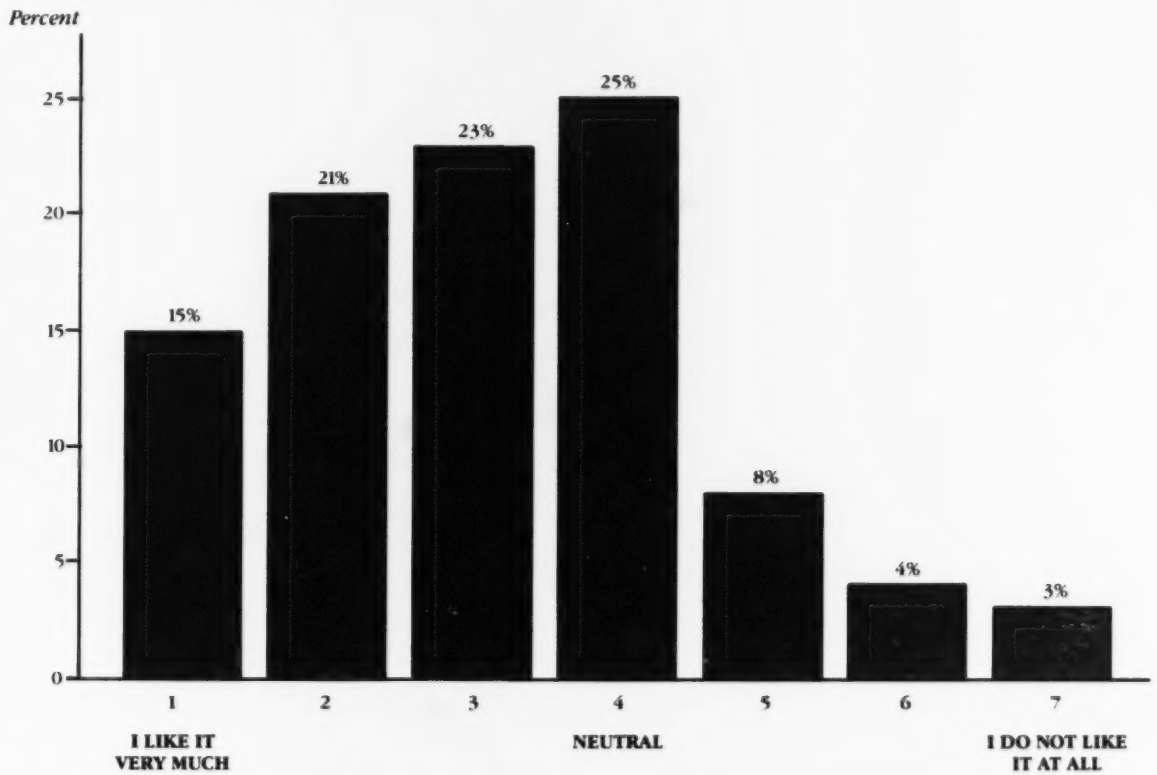
Other questions in the survey (Q31-34,36,38-40,42-43) further address students' evaluation of the catechist, in a standard "strongly agree/strongly disagree" format. Responses to these statements show very little change across the groups of students we have been considering (see Exhibit 3.1). In general, the responses portray a positive image of catechists: they like and challenge their students, have a reasonable understanding of them, and a significant minority make an effort to be knowledgeable about matters that occur outside of class. This confirms the perceptions of the site visitors that good catechists are aware of what is going on in their students' lives and are one of the major unrecognized assets of American Catholic parish life.

Views on Programs

Overall Ratings

If one were to paraphrase student reactions to the PRE programs that were studied, the best single word would probably be "okay." Responding on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (I like it very much) to 7 (I do not like it at all), only 15% of the students rate the program 5, 6, or 7, but a full quarter (25%) of all students rate the program simply "neutral"—a "4". Fifteen percent of the students give the best rating of "1" (see Exhibit 3.2). Furthermore, these ratings are quite stable across the groups of students we have been examining; elementary school students rate their programs slightly, but not much, better than high school students rate theirs.

EXHIBIT 3.2 Overall Rating of PRE Programs Studied
(Percent of all students giving each response)



Four other questions in the survey can be considered global ratings of the catechetical program. All are presented in strongly agree/strongly disagree format. They are:

I would recommend this program to my friends who are not in it. (Q35)

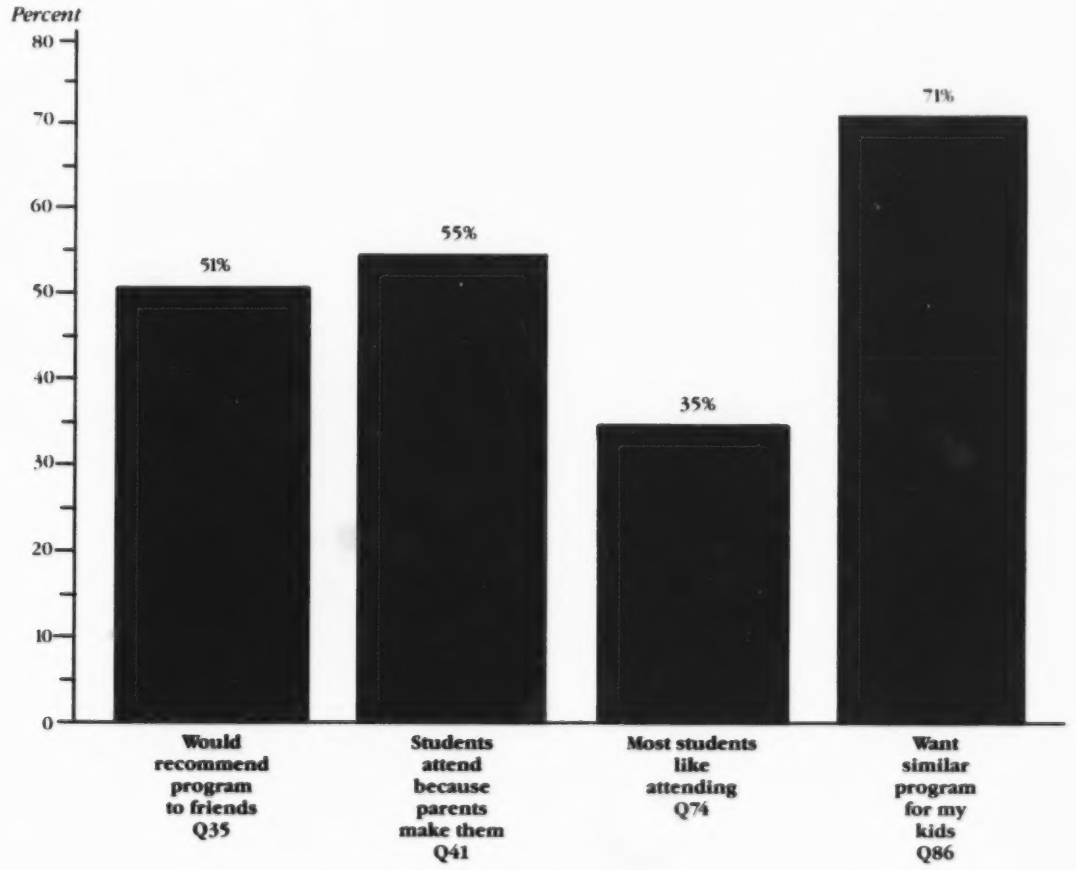
Most students would not attend this program if their parents did not make them come. (Q41)

Most students really like attending the sessions. (Q74)

If I have children when I grow up I want them to have a program like this one. (Q86)

The responses to these questions (which, again, do not vary across the groups of students) are shown in Exhibit 3.3. These ratings seem contradictory until one notices that statements referring to "most students" tend to be negative (attending because of their parents; don't really like attending), while statements about the students' own opinions (I would recommend it; I want my children to have the same) tend to be more positive.

EXHIBIT 3.3 Global Ratings of PRE Programs Studied
(Percent Agree Strongly or Agree Somewhat)



Ratings of Program Resources and Activities

Availability.

As discussed in chapter 1, the staff questionnaire addressed the availability of various resources for PRE programs (Staff Q22) but did not inquire as to which resources were available for which program. However, this question is addressed in the

student survey. Student question 30 asked the students how they would "rate the following aspects of this program." One of the options was "does not apply," presumably corresponding to a situation in which a particular resource was either not available or not used in a given program. These ratings are shown below.

Aspects of PRE Programs Rated "Not Applicable"
(Percentage of all students; Q30)

Music performed	40%
Guest speakers	33
Music heard	30
Role play	28
Films, slides, or other visuals	14
Liturgies	11
Books and other reading materials	8
Group activities	2
Prayer opportunities	2

One may reasonably conclude from this information that performing and listening to music, guest speakers, and role playing, while they occur in a majority of PRE programs, are less frequent than the remaining resources and activities. Group activities and prayer opportunities are nearly universal. Reports of the availability of these resources do not vary by gender or family composition but, in one case, they are affected by year in school. High schools programs are less likely to have reading materials (10% "not applicable) than elementary programs (4%).

Quality.

Ratings of the quality of resources and activities were surprisingly constant. Without oversimplifying, it can be reported that guest speakers, audiovisual aids, music performed, music heard, and role playing were all rated 21% excellent, 35% good, 28% fair, and 15% poor. The remaining resources were rated higher.

Resources/activities rated "good" or "excellent"
(Percentage of all students; Q30)

Discussions and group activities	77%
Opportunities for prayer	70
Liturgies	68
Books and other reading materials	61

While the ratings under discussion were constant with respect to gender and family composition, there were some differences with respect to grade in school. These are displayed below.

Resources/activities rated "good" or "excellent" by grade in school
(Percentage of all students; Q30)

	Elementary	*High School*
Books and other reading materials	71%	54%
Learning games and role playing	66	56
Guest speakers	64	57
Audio-visuals	63	54
Music performed	61	46
Music heard	59	59

Reasons for the lower high school ratings may be related to higher expectations. As will be discussed below, student responses to two open-ended questions indicate a certain desire on the part of the students for more current materials. If this means that PRE programs have to attempt to compete with the popular media, the battle will be lost before it is joined. Religious education programs and publishers simply do not have the resources to compete with the entertainment industry. However, in some of these areas—role playing, guest speakers—options for increasing the quality of the activities may be available at lower cost. In any case, these are areas that would seem to require the attention of DREs working with high school students.

Ratings of Program Content

Stated content areas.

The student survey provided an interesting opportunity to obtain an overview of the content of effective PRE programs. Student questions 44-71 asked whether the student's catechetical program covered each of a series of content areas. The resulting list provides a rather complete picture of current program content, so the responses are presented in some detail in Exhibit 3.4.

Differences in program content by gender are relatively infrequent, and most seem to relate to the areas of morality and sexuality, with boys reporting that they receive more instruction in those areas than girls. In addition, boys are more likely to report that their classes addressed issues in making career choices.[3]

When we compare elementary and high school classes, the differences are much more common, but the pattern is just as clear. There is a consistent shift in the high school classes away from areas of cognition—the content of the faith, Bible study, doctrine, theology, church history, modes of prayer—and toward socialization—interpersonal relations, moral decision-making, communication skills, and the like. To some extent this might be expected; only a finite amount of time is available in courses, and the infusing of a Catholic perspective on these issues would certainly be an important aspect of PRE programs for this age group.

But at the same time, the figures in Exhibit 3.4 suggest that high school students' understanding of their faith heritage is not progressing and maturing with other areas of knowledge. This is especially interesting in light of the site visitors' comments concerning Catholic identity (see Appendix A). Just at the time when students' identity as Catholics is being challenged by both the culture and their evangelical peers, there is a de-emphasis on Catholic theology and doctrine. Further assessments of PRE programs need to address ways in which balance can be maintained between the need to address the issues of students maturing as persons, and their needs as maturing Catholics.

Another major difference between grade school and high school programs occurs in the area of testing. High school programs are only about half as likely to test their participants as are grade school programs. This presents further evidence of a shift, over time, away from the presentation of content toward emphasis on life experience and life skills.

Open-ended questions.

Question 90 of the student survey asked "what was left out" of their PRE programs, and Question 111 asked whether there was anything else "you feel we should know in order to make Catholic catechetical programs as good as they can be."

A discussion of how these open-ended responses were coded can be found in Appendix D, but for the present discussion a few brief points seem important. In examining students' responses to the two questions, considerable overlap was found. (Indeed, in answering Q111, several students wrote simply, "See my answer to question 90.") Therefore, a single list of response categories was developed to describe both

EXHIBIT 3.4 Program Content
(Percent responding "true" to each aspect)

My PRE Program Teaches About . . .	Total	Gender		Grades	
		Male	Female	5th - 8th	9th - 12th
How to have a good life	82%	82%	82%	84%	80%
Old Testament stories	70	70	70	77	66
How to understand myself	79	80	78	76	81
Parent-teen communication	51	53	50	47	54
New Testament stories	85	84	85	90	81
Love and Christianity	93	91	95	92	94
The meaning of the sacraments	84	83	84	90	80
God's life in us	92	90	93	93	91
Understanding the Bible	63	64	62	76	54
Basic Catholic beliefs	77	79	75	82	73
Relationships	89	88	90	91	88
Relating to the opposite sex	38	41	35	15	52
How to make moral decisions	75	78	72	70	78
Specific moral issues	58	64	54	39	70
Other religions	41	40	42	44	38
Being a unique person	78	79	78	80	77
Proper place of sexuality	42	48	38	23	55
Expressing our own experiences	49	48	50	50	48
History of the Catholic Church	65	67	64	73	60
History of my own parish	32	33	31	42	26
How the Church is governed	56	58	55	68	49
Different ways of praying	73	74	72	78	69
How to make career choices	20	24	18	21	20
Dealing with religious doubt	68	72	64	67	68
Life of religious men and women	55	54	55	61	51
Evil of racial hatred	49	48	49	51	47
Responsibility to the poor	63	62	64	70	59
My PRE program has tests	43	45	42	60	32

questions. Up to two separate responses were coded for each question. Exhibits 3.5 and 3.6 show the frequency of responses for these two questions. Some twenty-three separate categories were used to code the students' responses. They were:

1) *Blank; "No comment"; "I have nothing to say".*

2) *like it the way it is.* This category includes those who used almost exactly those words to those who felt the program was the most important thing that had ever happened to them.

EXHIBIT 3.5 What Was Left Out of Your Program?
(Student Q90) *less than 0.6%

	Total	Male	Female	Elementary schooler	High schooler
1. Blank/Nothing	74%	81%	70%	76%	74%
2. Like It As Is	1	1	1	*	2
3. More Discussion	8	6	10	8	8
4. More Doctrine	3	3	4	2	4
5. More Bible Study	2	2	2	2	2
6. More Evangelical	1	1	1	2	1
7. Livelier	1	*	2	2	1
8. Greater Control	*	*	1	1	*
9. Greater Community	1	*	1	1	1
10. Younger Teachers	*	*	*	*	*
11. Better Teachers	*	*	*	1	0
12. Role of Teens in Church	1	*	1	2	*
13. More Outside Activities	3	2	4	3	3
14. More Retreats	*	*	1	0	1
15. More About Other Religions	1	*	2	1	2
16. Treat Us Like Adults	*	*	*	*	*
17. Shorten Classes	*	*	0	0	*
18. More Audio-Visuals	*	0	*	*	*
19. More Current Materials	1	1	2	1	2
20. Too "Schoolish"	*	1	*	*	1
21. Too Religious	*	*	*	*	*
22. Let Kids Run It	*	1	*	1	*
23. Other	3	2	2	4	3

3) *More open discussion; More teen concerns (sex, dating, abortion, drugs, suicide); Moral decision-making.*

4) *More Church history; Doctrine; Catholic apologetics; Sacramental theology.* The term apologetics is used here in its strict sense; this reflects those students who asked to be taught how to defend their faith against the attacks of their evangelical peers. The other terms are self-explanatory.

5) *More Bible study.*

6) *More Evangelical doctrine.* A number of students reported evangelical spiritualities and stated that what was missing from their classes was an emphasis on how these were the last times, or that it was necessary to establish a relationship with Jesus as their personal savior.

7) *Class is boring; needs to be livelier.*

8) *Greater class discipline is needed; Get those who don't want to be in class out.*

EXHIBIT 3.6 What Would Make Programs As Good As Possible?
(Student Q111) *less than 0.6%

	Total	Male	Female	Elementary schooler	High schooler
1. Blank/Nothing	56%	64%	50%	54%	58%
2. Like It As Is	8	6	8	10	7
3. More Discussion	10	6	12	9	11
4. More Doctrine	2	2	2	3	1
5. More Bible Study	2	1	2	3	1
6. More Evangelical	*	*	*	0	*
7. Livelier	4	2	5	6	2
8. Greater Control	1	1	1	*	1
9. Greater Community	1	1	1	1	1
10. Younger Teachers	2	1	2	1	2
11. Better Teachers	1	1	1	1	1
12. Role of Teens in Church	*	0	*	1	0
13. More Outside Activities	5	4	6	8	4
14. More Retreats	2	2	2	1	2
15. More About Other Religions	*	*	*	*	*
16. Treat Us Like Adults	1	1	1	0	2
17. Shorten Classes	1	*	1	1	*
18. More Audio-Visuals	2	2	2	3	1
19. More Current Materials	2	2	3	1	3
20. Too "Schoolish"	1	1	1	2	1
21. Too Religious	*	*	2	*	*
22. Let Kids Run It	1	1	1	1	1
23. Other	10	8	10	10	10

9) *Greater sense of community in the program.* While those exact words are never used, this phrase reflects students' unhappiness at the presence of cliques in the class or a desire that class members get to know each other better.

10) *Teachers who understand teens; Younger teachers.*

11) *Better-trained teachers; Teachers who care about teaching.*

12) *Explain role of teens in Church life.*

13) *More outside activities; More fun stuff.*

14) *More retreats.*

15) *Learning about other religions; Ecumenism.* Some respondents indicate they would like to "shop around" and decide what religion they would like to hold; others indicate an educational interest.

16) *Treat us like grown-ups; Don't nag us.*

17) *Shorter or less frequent classes.*

18) *More movies or other A-V.*

19) *More current educational materials; More current social/world issues.*

20) *Classes are too "schoolish".*

21) *Too strong an emphasis on religion.*

22) *Let the kids run the class; Material as presented is over our heads.*

23) *Other.*

The first and most notable characteristic of the responses to the open-ended questions is their absence. A majority of the students did not respond to these questions. Getting respondents to answer open-ended questions at the end of long surveys is notoriously difficult,[4] and one way of dealing with this problem would simply be to call the non-respondents "missing" and report the responses as a percentage of those who did actually respond. This would have the effect of inflating all of the percentages shown, making the responses seem more important than they are. At the same time, one suspects that those who take the time to write may be speaking for a much larger constituency who, for one reason or another, are less likely to comment. Therefore, we present these data but request that appropriate caution be applied in interpreting them.

The responses highlight several issues that were also addressed in the site visits discussed in chapter 1 and Appendix A. Among those students who made a comment, the most frequent concerned discussion—the opportunity to bring one's own ideas into the class and to discuss issues that were close to one's own concerns. This was noted by the site visitors as a characteristic of effective programs and is called for by the participants themselves. While such discussion is an important part of education, we will see shortly that it is only part of what the PRE program is trying to accomplish. And, in fact, a pattern of two separate "response styles" emerges among the minority of students who had any comment to make. That is, students seemed to be asking either for a teen group or religious education, not both. The responses seemed to be in one of two forms. The first can be paraphrased this way:

> We need to have classes that tell us more about how to live our lives as teenagers, classes that explain why the Church is against teen sex and abortion. Things have changed, and the teachers don't understand what it's like to be young now. Don't preach at us; let's have more open discussion about sex, abortion, drugs, and suicide, and have more group activities.

The second response style can be paraphrased this way:

> My teacher acts like the Church began in 1963. We need to know more about the Church's entire history. We need to know more about the Bible, and what it means, and the basic stuff, like the Ten Commandments. Lastly, a lot of people in the class don't want to be there, and they're really disruptive. It would be better if we could have a class just for those who want to go.

In light of the fact that these two composites emerge from students in programs that were designated a priori as good programs, they indicate a basic tension for DREs. Some of the students want a teen program; others want religious education. The challenge, it would seem, is to educate the students to the importance of both, then to educate the students in both.

Another concern reflected in the responses to the open-ended questions (and in the report of the site visitors) has to do with the interaction of Catholic youth with evangelical youth. The emphasis on ecumenism since the Second Vatican Council is certainly to be preferred to triumphalism or attempts to convert members of other mainline denominations. However, the emphasis on ecumenism has progressed so

far that many students receive no training whatever in Catholic apologetics and are completely unprepared when confronted with a "Bible-bashing evangelical," quoting proof-texts to demonstrate that the pope is the Anti-Christ. Such encounters can be traumatic to young Catholics just beginning a critical examination of their faith. Research on persuasion and attitude change indicates that even minimal prior exposure to such arguments can "inoculate" students against such attacks. Several students responding made it clear that they wanted such help. In addition, the presence of response category indicates that both elementary and high school students are being exposed to such experiences, in some cases to the point that they themselves have already adopted sola fides theologies. It is clear that teachers must prepare their students to be able to defend their faith.

Conclusions

Overall, the state of these effective PRE programs surveyed might best be described as "ready," or "in place" but in need of attention and strengthening.

Given that such programs are bound to be viewed, to a greater or lesser extent, as "more school," the students' attitudes toward PRE programs are relatively good. While approval ratings for materials decline somewhat over time, students seem happy with their catechists, and their catechists (as seen through the students' eyes) seem motivated and ready to teach. The likelihood that catechists are rated as enthusiastic rises over time. The programs seem quite competent at infusing basic Catholic formation and socialization, as discussed in the previous chapter.

But there is a concern, evidenced here and voiced by the site visitors, concerning a basic aspect of these programs—that of the cognitive component of the programs. Emphasis on the doctrine and content of the faith declines over time, to be replaced by issues in interpersonal relations. Given the increasing involvement of the public school system in such issues, the function of PRE programs becomes what the function of Catholic education has always been to infuse the individual's life with the morals and values derived from the Catholic tradition, and to bring that perspective to bear on contemporary issues and daily living. If the Catholic Church is to flourish in the United States, these programs—which will bear the brunt of the educational burden in the absence of the extensive parochial school system of the past—must help to produce not only dedicated Christians but informed Catholics.

CHAPTER

4

Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: Factors Linked to Student Outcomes

One of the questions religious educators commonly ask is, "What can we do in my parish to strengthen the impact of PRE programs on children and youth" In the more formal educational literature this question is normally couched in the language of "inputs and outcomes." Inputs are the factors that influence how students learn and grow. Some of them are beyond the control of educators. Among these are the predispositions to learning that students bring to the educational enterprise and the degree to which one's parents encourage and reward learning. Other input factors are within the control of educators. These potential determinants of student outcomes include administrative and program factors such as characteristics of teachers, program resources, program goals, and program content and methodology.

In this chapter we seek to describe PRE input factors that are associated with student outcomes, expecting that this new information will have practical utility for administrators, catechists, and program volunteers. To do this requires coming to terms with the outcomes that PRE programs are designed to promote. These outcomes are not particularly easy to define or measure.

In general terms, most would agree that the goals of PRE programs are to foster the faith life of participants and to socialize them into active participation in the full life of the Church. Involved, here, are cognitive, affective, and behavioral goals that might be described as follows:

- *Cognitive.* Developing an intellectual understanding of and appreciation for the content of the Christian faith in general and the Catholic heritage in particular. Here the emphasis is on helping students to know the "stuff" of faith, including basic doctrinal and moral concepts, Scripture, and Church history.
- *Affective.* Fostering the development of a personal faith that is grounded in a deep emotional or affective bond with God and a deep personal reckoning with the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- *Behavioral.* Developing values, behaviors, and life priorities that are consistent with a personal faith. Dimensions here include both *valuing* and *doing,* where commitments to Church and family, community and globe, are translated into action.

This study provides a look at some but not all of these outcomes. Exhibit 4.1 lists the five on which our search for input-outcome connections is based. The student

EXHIBIT 4.1 Measures of Student Outcomes

Loving God
The degree to which student believes God is loving (student Q20)

Closeness to God
The degree to which a student reports feeling close to God (Student Q25)

Closeness to Catholic Church
The degree to which a student reports feeling close to the Catholic Church (Student Q24)

Closeness to parish
The degree to which a student reports feeling close to his/her parish (Student Q26)

Positive moral values
The degree to which a student affirms moral positions taught by the Catholic Church (Student Q27 & 28)

survey did not seek to measure cognition. What treatment there was of this area is discussed in the section entitled "Religious Knowledge" in chapter 2.

The five measures fall into the affective and behavioral categories. We use scales called loving God and closeness to God to approximate the affective dimension. The other three (closeness to Catholic Church, closeness to parish, and positive moral values) represent the behavioral dimension. Though these five scales do not fully cover all the important domains in the affective and behavioral areas, they do give us a good starting point for understanding how PRE programs work.

The basic question we ask is this: What PRE input factors are linked to where students fall on these five scales We divide PRE input factors into five categories: student background factors, family factors (e.g., the frequency with which a family prays together or talks about their faith together), administrative factors, *process* program factors (e.g., the pedagogical methods used in PRE programs) and *content* program factors (the topics, issues, or content covered in PRE programs). All of these examined input factors are listed in Exhibit 4.2.

Information about administrative factors is taken from the staff survey. Information about all other factors is taken from the student survey. In order to examine how administrative factors relate to student outcomes, each of the seven students in each parish was assigned the scores from the parish staff survey.[2] We split the student samples into two groups—elementary (grades 5-8) and high school (grades 9-12)—in order to examine whether input-outcome relationships differ for these two age groups.

We use correlation coefficients to describe the connections between inputs and outcomes. A correlation is a statistic which ranges between -1.0 and $+1.0$ and describes the magnitude of relation. In this chapter, we discuss correlations of .20 or higher. With the samples used in this analysis (elementary 368, high school 524), a correlation of .20 or higher is statistically significant, suggesting that a meaningful relationship exists between the variables in question.[3] A word of caution. A significant correlation denotes relation, not causation. For example, we find that the quality of catechists, as rated by students, is significantly related to students' reports on closeness to parish. We do not know from these data if high-quality catechists promote closeness to parish or if students who feel close to their parish tend to elevate their perceptions of catechists. Hence, we need to be clear that the methodology employed in this chapter suggests but does not conclusively prove how PRE programs impact students.

In this same regard, several other caveats are in order. The information about program process and content comes from students, and this may bring a certain degree of subjectivity to the analysis. The analysis is done on a constricted range of PRE pro-

EXHIBIT 4.2 Factors Examined for Impact on Students' Beliefs and Values

Student Background Factors	Age Sex Years in PRE programs Mother's education Father's education
Family Factors	Frequency of family prayer Frequency of family religious conversations Mother's involvement in PRE program Father's involvement in PRE program
PRE Administrative Factors	Program is related to CCD board (yes/no) Program is related to parish education committee (yes/no) Program is related to parish council (yes/no) Parish needs assessment done in last 3 years (yes/no) PRE program has specific budget (yes/no) PRE program has written goals for catechists (yes/no) Budget for PRE program Number of teaching materials (video, films, audio, etc.) Degree of cooperation among staff Degree of support from diocesan office Number of catechists Percent of catechists who are certified
PRE Program Factors: Process	Program offers service projects (yes/no) Frequency of PRE program meetings Amount student likes PRE program Quality of PRE program teaching & learning methods Quality of catechists Degree to which catechist discusses program with parents Degree to which program uses tests & quizzes Degree to which program relates faith to personal experience Degree to which students' friends attend this PRE program Degree to which program is flexible & open to new ideas
PRE Program Factors: Content	Program emphasis on: teen-parent communication love and Christian faith meaning of sacraments reading & understanding Bible friendship & communication sex & dating how to make moral decisions moral issues like abortion and nuclear weapons history of Catholic Church on learning to deal with religious doubts teaching responsibility for the poor self-understanding practical real-life applications of faith

grams—those nominated as particularly effective. We do not know how well linkages described in this chapter generalize to all PRE programs. Finally, not all potentially important administrative and program factors were measured in the surveys. Accordingly, an analysis is limited to the issues that were covered, knowing that future research is needed to expand on the work described in this report. But what we can offer in this report are some important tentative conclusions about PRE programs which can guide future research and inform current discussion about ways to strengthen PRE programs.

Predictors of Student Outcomes

Exhibits 4.3 and 4.4 present input factors that are linked to the five outcome measures. Linkages for elementary-age youth (grades 5-8) are found in Exhibit 4.3, and linkages for high school youth are in Exhibit 4.4.

EXHIBIT 4.3 Factors Linked to Student Outcomes: Elementary Grades (1-8)
Only correlations of ± .20 or stronger are listed

FACTORS	Loving God	Closeness to God	Closeness to Catholic Church	Closeness to Parish	Positive Moral Values
Student Background					
Family			Mother's involvement in PRE, .21	Mother's involvement in PRE, .26	
Administration		PRE program has written goals, .25 Number of meetings per month, .20			
PRE Program: Process		Liking for PRE program, .22 Quality of program methods, .22	Liking for PRE program, .40 Quality of program methods, .29 Quality of catchists, .28	Liking for PRE program, .45 Quality of program methods, .34 Quality of catechists, .30 Degree open & flexible, .22	Has test & quizzes, .30
PRE Program: Content Emphases		Parent-teen communication, .32 Love & faith, .31 Sacraments, .28 Religious doubts, .25	Self-understanding, .25 Practical faith, .23 Parent-teen communication, .21	Parent-teen communication, .29 Self-understanding, .24 Practical faith, .24 Friendship & communication, .21	How to make moral decisions, .40 Love & faith, .38 Sacraments, .37 Religious doubts, .36 Responsibility for the poor, .31 Sex & dating, .30 Reading & understanding the Bible, .25 Self-understanding, .20

Major findings can be summarized in these seven statements.

1. Student background factors are not strongly linked to outcomes. Student scores on each of the five outcome measures do not show strong differences as a function of age, sex, parental education, or years of participation in a PRE program. This latter point means, for example, that 5th graders are about as likely to feel close to God as

EXHIBIT 4.4 Factors Linked to Student Outcomes: High Grades (9-12)
Only correlations of ± .20 or stronger are listed

FACTORS	Loving God	Closeness to God	Closeness to Catholic Church	Closeness to Parish	Positive Moral Values
Student Background					
Family		Frequency of family religious conversation, .20	Frequency of family religious conversation, .25	Frequency of family religious conversation, .26	Frequency of family religious conversation, .20
Administration					
PRE Program: Process	Quality of catechists, .27 Quality of program methods, .22	Quality of catechists, .21	Liking for PRE program, .32 Quality of catechists, .30 Quality of program methods, .23 Friends attend, .20	Quality of catechists, .36 Quality of program methods, .36 Degree open & flexible, .27 Friends attend, .23	Quality of program methods, .21 Quality of catechists, .20
PRE Program: Content Emphases	Religious doubts, .20 Read & understand the Bible, .20		Self-understanding, .26 Religious doubts, .26 Practical faith, .24	Practical faith, .28 Parent-teen communication, .26 Religious doubts, .26 Self-understanding, .22 Friendship & communication, .21	Love & faith, .20

8th graders or 12th graders. At first glance, this may seem to be "bad news," for we hope that each year of experience with PRE adds some increment to affective and behavioral goals. But there are other considerations that render this "bad news" judgment premature. One is that the outcome measures employed in this study may not be particularly sensitive to gradations in commitment. Another is that though we do not find evidence of growth related to PRE experience, neither do we find any major tendency toward "backsliding." Other research commonly finds that students in the junior and senior high school years struggle with religious doubt and often disengage from religious institutions.[4] In this study, a case can be made that length of exposure to PRE programs might prevent or retard this rather typical adolescent disengagement from Church and faith.[5]

2. PRE administrative factors, as measured, are not closely linked to student outcomes. We do not find any strong evidence that factors such as budget, certification of catechists, and degree of diocesan support greatly affect student outcomes. We suspect that there may be a correlation, but these data indicated that only in the case of elementary students' "closeness to God" do administrative factors emerge as noteworthy correlates. One explanation is that the effects of good administration are masked. Administrative factors likely influence the quality of the PRE program, and the PRE program, in both its process and content, appears to make a difference in student outcomes. Another explanation is that the staff survey, which was source for all information about administration, did not cover what might be some of the most determining administrative factors. Areas not adequately surveyed, for example, include whether the DRE is full-time or part-time, the climate that prevails in the PRE program, and the kind of leadership exercised by the PRE staff.

3. Student outcomes are strongly linked to program factors. Both procedural and content factors repeatedly appear as significant linkages.

4. Most student outcome measures are positively associated with these program process factors: students' ratings of the quality of catechists (e.g., the degree to which catechists are seen as caring and competent), the quality of program methods (e.g., how students rate reading materials, presentations, music, liturgies, and discussions), and the degree to which students report liking their PRE program. These three factors seem important to both elementary-aged and high school youth. The linkages are particularly strong for *closeness to parish.*

5. Outcome scores on closeness to parish and closeness to Catholic Church are higher for high school youth who report that many of their friends attend the same PRE program, compared to youth who report less participation by friends. This attests to the power of peers in religious education.

6. Program content is consistently related to outcomes. It appears that what matters is not so much traditional intellectual content about theology, Bible, and Church but the degree of emphasis on helping youth with the struggle of making faith relevant to their major life struggles and questions. We know from other research that the major agenda in the lives of adolescents includes things like sexuality, communication with parents, making moral decisions, doubt, making and keeping friends, and understanding the self. It appears that PRE programs that take on these issues and apply faith perspectives to them are the ones that successfully promote the kinds of outcomes that are sought. Hence, what works seems to be a kind of experientially-based program which "goes with" the agendas that students bring to PRE. This is not to say that traditional content is unimportant. Note that the factors called "read and understand the Bible" and "teach about the sacraments" occasionally appear as significant correlates.

7. Family factors are also important, particularly in the high school years. Students whose parents are involved in their PRE program and students who experience engagement with faith issues as part of family life are more likely than other students to report favorable outcomes. This is an important finding which reaffirms that families and church-based programs constitute an important partnership. The suggestion here is that programs best affect students when the family is considered part of the religious education team. Without faith-supporting activities at home, many youth fall prey to a religious skepticism that grows and festers. When parents are seen as mechanical religionists who practice the faith only at Mass, adolescents tend to learn that faith is an adult game that really has no important tie to work or family or life decisions. The family that practices faith models a mature faith, and the message does not escape our children. Note that family factors are more important during the high school years than during the elementary years. This corresponds with the age-related timing of religious doubt and skepticism.

Conclusions

Many of the input factors examined in this chapter are linked to each other and are hence somewhat redundant in influence. For example, students' ratings of program methods are highly correlated with ratings of catechists, suggesting that these are not independent factors exercising independent or discrete influence. We used additional statistical techniques to help us isolate the most important linkages to student outcomes after these redundancies are statistically controlled.[7]

For high school students, a set of five input factors explains a great deal about their location on the outcome measures.[8] Generally speaking, these five are the most important linkages:

- Frequency of family religious conversations
- Program emphasis on reading and understanding the Bible
- Program emphasis on a "faith which is practical"
- Program emphasis on promoting self-understanding
- How much one likes PRE

When a young person has these five things working for him/her, positive values and beliefs are particularly high. The good news is that each of these—and particularly the first four—are within religious educators' sphere of influence. Three of them have to do with program content emphases.

Each ought not be interpreted in a rigid, literal way but rather taken to represent a kind of approach to PRE. The message seems to be that traditional substance (e.g., Bible) when combined with helping students experience and feel and apply the faith to their unique life dramas (i.e., practical faith, self-understanding) is a particularly powerful formula. The point is that the combination of substance and experiential learning works hand in hand and that one without the other does not work as well. This reiterates the earlier findings from the open-ended questions in the student survey concerning the desirability of a combination of approaches to PRE. With this combination, faith is alive, real, and dynamic.

We see again the importance of family as a partner in religious education. The effect of PRE programs is strengthened when the family is a partner and weakened when families choose to let the parish do it all. The implication here is that the effective religious educator works not only with children and young people but also with parents to strengthen the family's role in faith and value development.

The fifth factor—liking for PRE—is a bit more elusive from a programming point of view. We know that liking for PRE is partly predicated on the three program emphases discussed above. It is also tied to having one's friends involved in the same program, suggesting that efforts to build and sustain close interpersonal relationships

within a PRE group are a worthwhile goal. We also know that liking for PRE is tied to experiencing a program that is "fun and enjoyable" (student Q77). There are, of course, a number of ways to promote such fun, via games, outings, and events. That seems to be important here. But youth are telling us, we think, that the effective PRE program is one of balance—there is time for fun and games and time for friendship-making, but a high priority is also given to content.

For students in the elementary years (grades 5-8), the most powerful ingredients are both similar and different. In terms of similarity, we find evidence that each of the five factors found important for senior high school youth are also strongly linked to student outcomes for elementary youth. But two additional factors emerge for elementary school students. One is program emphasis on parent-teen conversation. What elementary students seem to be saying is that during the young adolescent years parents are particularly crucial for helping them deal with the "big" questions of identity, values, and faith, questions given birth in the 5th-8th grade period. PRE programs that encourage dialogue, or help in initiating dialogue, are probably seen by students as particularly helpful. In turn, this predisposes them to "catch" what PRE programs seek to teach.

The other factor is frequency with which elementary school PRE groups meet. Student outcomes are stronger for youth who have more exposure to PRE programming. Since nearly all (85%) programs meet four times a month, we suspect that the meaningful difference in quality comes via outings, retreats, and service projects.

CHAPTER

5

Summary and Implications

In considering what has been learned from this study of effective parish religious education programs, it will be instructive to look again at the scope and limitations of the surveys.

Eighty-three dioceses nominated as effective a total of 258 PRE programs. Each of the parishes was contacted, and 146 agreed to participate in the survey. Each then filled out a staff survey and was asked to distribute seven student surveys to a random sample of boys and girls in the PRE programs. Most parishes returned all seven.

The student and staff surveys cannot tell us what distinguishes effective programs from ineffective ones, since all of the PRE programs involved were nominated as being more effective a priori. They cannot conclusively tell us what the impact of these effective programs is on their students, since the questionnaires were administered only once and therefore cannot display change over time. Also, there was no "control group" of Catholic youth of the same age not involved in these programs.

What can be gleaned from this report, as we have demonstrated in the previous chapters, is twofold. First, we have presented "state of the program" information concerning the staff and students of programs considered effective by diocesan offices—what these exemplary programs are like, what content areas are being covered with elementary and high school students, what the staffing situation is, what percent of the catechists are paid or volunteer, what the students are like, what they believe, and what they like and dislike about program staff and content.

Secondly, we have captured some sense of the dynamics of the interrelations among these staff and student characteristics and how they combine and interact in such programs. In chapter 4, we use the data at hand, fallible though it is, to speculate about program factors which are particularly linked to student outcomes.

In this concluding chapter, we will briefly review what we have seen in the previous chapters and address the implication of these findings for conducting effective parish religious education programs.

Based on both the results of the staff survey and the observation of the site visitors presented in Appendix A, there are a number of major findings concerning parish religious education programs.

1) *Quality does not chiefly result from finances.* It was repeatedly noted that good programs were not just the programs that had the greatest number of resources and the strongest support. Such assets go a long way toward making a good program bet-

ter, and anyone serious about the improvement of parish religious education must be willing to provide financial resources. These resources, however, will be ineffective without planning, goal setting, and leadership.

It often seemed to be the case that, wherever there was a need, there was a way of addressing that need. Students seemed ready to receive whatever type of program the parish was able to offer, and the degree to which they felt directly involved (class discussions, retreats) seemed to determine how happy they were with their programs. Also, one would expect that students do not require more from their PRE programs than they do from their community. Students in more "upscale," higher-income communities no doubt have higher expectations, and their programs no doubt have higher budgets; those from poorer communities apparently do not expect their religious education programs to be as resource-intensive.

In short, this is not an argument in favor of cutting PRE budgets; rather, it indicates that those responsible for PRE do as well as they can with what is available, and generally the outcome is well-received.

2) *Catechist training is a central issue.* Both the site visits and the staff survey made it clear that the majority of catechists are unpaid but recruited, based on the DRE's impression of the person's catechetical abilities. Programs that had access to diocesan-level catechist training seemed very happy to have such an opportunity, and those involved with such training, although in the minority, had high praise for it. If the Catholic Church in the United States is going to increase its reliance on PRE for the formation of its members, greater attention needs to be paid to the competence of its catechists. This leads directly to the next issue.

3) *Where has all the doctrine gone?* Apparently, most of the religious doctrine conveyed in PRE programs is conveyed in elementary school level programs, with high school level programs emphasizing the affective and behavioral rather than the cognitive aspects of faith. This occurs at a time when, previous research informs us, students are drifting away from formal religious concerns anyway. Is this, then, an appropriate response to an apparently "natural" developmental stage? Is it a good idea to "back off" on doctrine since student interest is declining anyway? Is it better to give the students practical religion that addresses their concerns and the decisions they are facing in terms of lifestyle than to burden them with detailed doctrinal issues?

Certainly it is important to help students at this crucial stage of development learn how to apply their faith to an increasingly complex life. Simple requirements of time will dictate that, as other issues need to be dealt with, training in doctrine will receive less attention. At the same time, an understanding of the faith, if it is to serve the believer well, must mature even as the person's understanding of mathematics, social studies, and all other areas of learning must mature. And here, no doubt, is part of the problem. Conveying the complexities of the Christian understanding simply requires more training at the high school level than at the elementary school level. Many PRE programs may simply not have people with sufficient background to teach doctrine to high school students.

One way to address this question is through catechist training. But training takes time, time that many catechists are already giving away free. Family catechesis would be another answer, but even people highly trained in catechesis note the considerable difficulties in attempting to "talk religion" with one's own adolescent children.

The issue is a difficult one, but until it is resolved, the issue of "Catholic identity"—raised by the site visitors and valued by the high school students—will remain problematic.

4) *Religious development is strong.* As we have noted, family religious practice as measured is relatively infrequent. But when it does occur, it tends to be related to a strong and positive image of God, independent of the simple effects of background or demographics. The other factor influencing belief, as discussed in chapter 3, is the content of the catechetical program to which students are being exposed.

These two findings cast our descriptive statistics into an interesting light. Because the ratings of God and Jesus and Mary are so high, one might argue that that the students are simply telling the researchers what they want to hear. But the findings on the factors contributing to those religious orientations paint a more positive picture. Students, at least to some extent, live the God they experience. If their family brings God to them through prayer and discussion, if they are happy with what they are receiving in their catechetical program, they view God as nurturing.

Perhaps related to this is the finding concerning Jesus and Mary images. We noted that Jesus and Mary images are strongly related and that characteristics ascribed to the one tend to be ascribed to the other. But the strongest relation between descriptions of Jesus and Mary had to do with the adjective "irrelevant." If Jesus or Mary was seen as irrelevant, the other was likely to be perceived the same way. The strength of this relation suggests that these two questions—Is Jesus relevant to you? Is Mary relevant to you? are really only one—Is religion relevant to you? This would indicate not only that Marian devotion is alive and well with these students, but that, at least among the students in these programs, there is a desire, as the site visitors noted, to understand their lives in religious terms.

5) *Values are strong.* We have seen that the values of these students are strong. Inasmuch as these students do not attend parochial schools, this strength of values is testimony to their parents, inculcating a Catholic value system through their own teaching and example.

As the students progress from elementary to high school, their stands on moral issues, while for the most part continuing to reflect a Catholic moral position, begin increasingly to shade toward indecision. Part of this change is simply the cognitive and moral development involved at this stage and the fact that condemnation is tempered with compassion. This also indicates the appropriateness of the increasing emphasis on moral decision-making for high school students, noted in chapter 3.

6) *Catechetical programs are rated positive, with room for improvement.* Overall, students who are in the effective programs rate them as good. This, of course, reflects a biased sample; these are good programs to start with. Furthermore, students with the least favorable attitude toward the program probably do not attend at all, or may have been less likely to fill out the survey. But it should be noted that, among those who had any written comment at all about their program, a number say that *they* liked it just the way it was. We noted also in chapter 4 the curious tendency for students to say that they liked the program (they would recommend it for their friends and children) but that the other students didn't (they only attended because their parents made them). This may reflect either the impact of a small group of vocally dissatisfied participants, or a distinction between the students' private opinion ("this is pretty interesting") and public presumption ("everybody hates school").

7) *Catechists are highly rated and well-liked.* Catechists are among the most highly rated of all aspects of the PRE programs, and, as was noted in chapter 3, a highly rated catechist contributes to a more positive faith. The overall ratings for the catechists are all the stronger in light of the fact that at least some students were entirely willing to criticize their catechists. In a small number of written responses, comments were made concerning catechists who "didn't understand kids." In another case a student wrote, "I know you have to take who you can get, but you might at least try to find somebody who wants to teach." We point to these responses to demonstrate that, when things were bad, students were willing to say so. Apparently, for most students, even if they didn't like the other aspects of their program, their catechist shone through as interested, dedicated, and prepared. The central component of any educational program—the teacher—gets high marks from the students in these PRE programs.

8) *Effective programs are well-structured.* Because this study examined that segment of PRE programs viewed as particularly effective, we can learn something sig-

nificant from administrative elements that typify these effective programs. We cannot tell in any absolute sense whether some or all of the characteristics are unique to effective programs. Perhaps some are simply universal. Without comparisons to less effective programs, we cannot be sure. But it is intuitively plausible that some of the factors common to effective programs play a role in making a program successful. We cite here, based on our interpretation of the findings, recommended administrative actions for all PRE programs. They are:

- Develop written goals for the PRE program and the catechetical staff and translate them into concrete and specific objectives
- Place high emphasis on the training of catechists, particularly in the area of doctrine
- Offer service projects and retreat experiences for junior and senior high youth
- Use parish liturgical events as a catechetical opportunity for both children and adults

9) *Effective programs are both life- and faith-enhancing.* Chapter 4 argues that positive student outcomes are strongly linked to programs that balance attention to traditional content (Bible, theology, Church) with an emphasis on helping youth see that faith means living religiously in daily life circumstances. Effective PRE programs know how to make faith relevant to the turmoil of adolescence. Successful PRE programs find creative ways for students to learn that faith speaks to life and the many decisions and choices it presents. We suspect that catechists who know how to help youth with the practical side of faith learned how to do this in the crucible of their own adolescent experiences. This know-how may not be trainable or teachable. If not, this may have important implications for recruitment of catechists. Catechists should be capable of personal witness.

10) *Effective programs involve families.* Positive student outcomes appear to be promoted by families who actively practice and discuss the faith at home. Yet, we discover that most PRE students report that their families do not talk about the faith or pray together. It is clear that there is work to be done here. Two of the best ways to strengthen PRE students' commitments to faith and Church and positive values are to teach parents the importance of family religious practices and to offer practical advice on how to do this. The importance of this challenge cannot be overstated.

Some Major Findings

Chapter 1

Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: Administrative and Program Factors

- The director of religious education (DRE) holds a position of unique importance in the overall leadership of the parish religious education (PRE) programs in this study; in 84% of the parishes the person primarily responsible for completing the staff survey was the DRE.
- Sixty-six percent of these programs have written goals, and 80% have a specific budget. No strong relation was found between size of budget and program effectiveness.
- Shared planning and coordination with a lay group such as CCD Board characterize nearly all these effective programs.
- Nearly 70% of the respondents receive "very high" or "moderately high" support from the diocese for their PRE program.
- Overall, effective PRE programs average 1 catechist for each 10 participants.
- Respondents (97%) report on-going recruitment of both catechists and support personnel.
- Sixty-two percent report that their catechists are not formally certified.
- Programs that deal with sacramental preparation (97%) and scripture (85%) are the types most offered for adults.
- The majority of effective PRE programs have regular service projects for junior and senior high school students.

Chapter 2

Students in Parish Religious Education Programs: Religious Behavior, Beliefs, Values, and Influences

- Family religious practice is rather infrequent; a majority of students say that their families "hardly ever" pray together (aside from meals) and that they rarely discuss religious topics.
- Replicating a very common finding, girls were somewhat more religious than boys on many of the measures of religiousness assessed.
- High school students are more likely to say they are "unsure" concerning actions that they formerly considered wrong.
- Students tend to form similar images of Jesus and Mary (gentle, warm, patient, comforting, loving) but these are not strongly related to any particular image of God.

Chapter 3

Students in Parish Religious Education Programs: Views on Their Programs and Catechists

- Catechists are well-liked by their students. Eighty-three percent of students rate their catechist's attitude as excellent or good, and 68% rate their presentations excellent or good. Students' general image of their catechist is of a person who likes and challenges students, has a good understanding of them, and often makes an effort to be knowledgable about the student's life outside the class.
- Students give their programs good ratings when asked their own opinion, but seem to think that "other students" are not as happy as they are.
- High school students have lower ratings of PRE resources and activities than elementary school students.
- Compared to elementary school PRE programs, high school PRE programs are less likely to deal with doctrine, theology, church history, prayer, and Bible study, and are more likely to deal with interpersonal relations, moral decision-making, communication skills and the like.
- The single most-frequently requested addition to the PRE programs is more student-lead discussion about topics of interest to them personally. Second most frequent is outside activities.

Chapter 4

Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: Factors Linked to Student Outcomes

- In order to estimate how PRE programs affect children and young people, five outcome scales were constructed. These are: the degree to which God is viewed as loving, closeness to God, closeness to parish, closeness to the Catholic Church, and positive moral values.
- Student scores on each of the five outcome measures do not differ strongly as a function of age, sex, parental education, or years of participation in a PRE program.
- PRE administrative factors, as measured, are not linked to student outcomes. We do not find any strong evidence that factors such as budget, certification of catechists, and degree of diocesan support greatly influence student outcomes.
- Most student outcome measures are positively associated with three program process factors: students' ratings of the quality of catechists (e.g., the degree to which catechists are seen as caring and competent), the quality of program methods (e.g., how students rate reading materials, presentations, music, liturgies, and discussions) and the degree to which students report liking their PRE program.
- Program content is consistently related to outcomes. It appears that what matters is not so much isolated intellectual content about doctrine, Bible, and Church but the degree of emphasis on using this knowledge to help youth with the struggle of making faith relevant to their major life struggles and questions.
- Family factors are also important, particularly in the high school years. Students whose parents are involved in their PRE program and students who experience engagement with faith issues as part of family life are more likely than other students to report favorable outcomes.

Appendix A

Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: A View from the Field

- Field observers reported that there were two major characteristics of successful parish religious education programs:
  —a sense of responsibility for and ownership of the program shared by a large number of people in the parish
  —an explicit vision and planning process guiding the program.
- The organization of successful programs had often developed in response to some crisis in the way religious education had previously been conducted (e. g., the closing of a school).
- Much effective catechesis occurs in the context of other liturgical events: sacramental preparation, liturgical planning, and Sunday liturgies.
- The quality of the relationship between the pastor and the director of religious education has direct and profound impact on program quality.
- Program quality was not strongly related to the financial status of the parish.
- Programs tend to take either an educational tone (often in parishes with schools) or a ministerial tone; differences in tone do not seem to affect program effectiveness.
- The weakest characteristic of each of these programs was in religious instruction: the conveying of the content of the faith, its doctrines and history.
- Affective goals—the establishment of prayer life and a general "religious tone" to the lives of the students—seemed particularly emphasized in these programs.
- Behavioral goals—the establishment of proper behavior and introduction into the local church community—were also emphasized.

Notes

Introduction

1. Thompson, A.D. and Hemrick, E., (1982). *The Last Fifteen Years: A Statistical Survey;* Washington, D.C. USCC Publications.

2. Fee, J.L., Greeley, A.M., McCready, W.C., & Sullivan, T.A. (1981). *Young Catholics in the United States and Canada.* New York: William H. Sadlier, Inc.; and Greeley, A.M., McCready, W.C., & McCourt, K. (1976). *Catholic schools in a declining church.* Kansas City: Sheed and Ward.

3. The NCEA Handbook for DREs (1983) offers definitions of the terms Director of Religious Education (a theologically trained individual, holding a master's degree, and having other qualifications) and Coordinator of Religious Education (someone in charge of a religious education program, but who has less formal training). Since no definitions of these terms were presented in the survey, throughout the present report the term "director of religious education" is used for the person in charge of a religious education program, regardless of training.

Chapter 1

1. All question numbers in this chapter refer to the staff questionnaire.

2. Leege, D. (1985). The American Catholic parish of the 1980's. In Byers (Ed.), The parish in transition (pp. 8-22). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Chapter 2

1. Chapter 1, which discussed administrative issues, presented information for grades K—12 and adults. Since the present chapter is based on questionnaire responses by the students themselves, it covers grades 5—12. See Appendix D for the methodology used in obtaining the student data.

2. For further details concerning the EA report, see Benson P. L., Johnson, A. L., Wood, P. K., Williams, D. L., & Mills, J. E. (1984). *Young adolescents and their parents: Project report.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. (Also published as Benson, P. L., Williams, D. L., & Johnson, A. L. (1986). *The quicksilver years: The hopes and fears of early adolescence.* San Francisco: Harper & Row.)

3. For further information concerning REKAP/REOI data, see Thompson, A.D. (1982). *That they may know you* . . . . Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

4. All question numbers in this chapter refer to the student questionnaire.

5. Percentages that are reported to be different (e.g., greater or less for a particular group) have been tested using the chi-squared statistic. All differences are statistically significant at the level of $p<.005$ (rather than the .05 level usually applied) except as otherwise noted.

6. Comparisons to the REKAP/REOI data are difficult, since the present survey asked about specific frequencies of practices (e.g., once a week, 2-3 times a month, while the REKAP/REOI data used response categories such as "often" and "occasionally.")

7. Difference in family prayer by family composition, $p<.02$.

8. For a summary of the evidence concerning gender differences in religiousness, see Argyle, M., & Beit-Hallahmi, B. (1975). *The social psychology of religion.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; and Gallup, G., Jr. (Ed.). (1985, May). Religion in America: 50 years: 1935-1985. *The Gallup Report,* Report No. 236.

9. See Gallup (1985), p. 22.

10. For a review of research and theory concerning religious conversion, see Spilka, B., Hood, R. W., Jr., & Gorsuch, R. L. (1985). *The psychology of religion: An empirical approach.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, chapter 9. For evidence concerning a decline in religiousness over time, see, for example, Benson et al. (1984). *Project report: Young adolescents and their parents.* Minneapolis: Search Institute; Benson et al. (1983). *Report on 1983 Minnesota survey on drug use and drug-related attitudes.* Minneapolis: Search Institute; Princeton Religious Research Center. (1984). *Religion in America.* Princeton, NJ: Author; Potvin et al. (1976). *Religion and American youth.* Washington, DC: U.S. Catholic Conference.

11. Differences in prayer style by gender: "by asking for things I need," $p<.05$; "by using prayers from books or memory," $p<.02$; "by reading the Bible," $p<.02$; others $p<.005$.

12. Differences in prayer style by family composition: "by asking for things I need," $p<.05$; others $p<.005$.

13. For treatments of several approaches to God image research, see Spilka et al. (1985), chapters 3 and 4.

14. See Fee, J. L., Greeley, A. M., McCready, W. C., & Sullivan, T. A. (1981). *Young Catholics in the United States and Canada.* Los Angeles: Sadlier.

15. Differences for God as "Father" by family composition, $p<.01$.

16. See Spilka et al. (1985), chapter 10.

17. This, of course, is not to deny the validity of such imagery (see, for example, the commentaries on the Song of Solomon) or to overlook its strong presence in mystical writings (Teresa of Avila, William Blake) but only to note the difficulty that most people of this age group have in integrating such concepts into their God image.

18. For those familiar with the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the intercorrelation matrix for the "religious" God images is as follows:

	Savior	*Master*	*Redeemer*	*Creator*	*Father*
Protector	.46	.24	.37	.35	.25
Savior		.30	.45	.45	.31
Master			.37	.34	.31
Redeemer				.49	.37
Creator					.45

All other God-image intercorrelations are less than .30 except for that between Protector and Friend (.30).

19. The main difference in the ratings of Jesus and Mary is the likelihood of each being considered "intelligent." A possible explanation for this difference lies in what the students recall from Scripture. In the Gospels, Jesus is often seen in debate with various adversaries, a difficulty to which he responds with acumen. In contrast, the Gospels do not offer us corresponding accounts of Mary's debating prowess. Thus, her intelligence is not called into question (52% of the students say it is very likely she is intelligent), but rather, it is simply never put on display.

20. The correlation between the ratings of Jesus and Mary on each adjective was as follows:.

Irrelevant	.72	Loving	.49
Unimportant	.58	Gentle	.42
Stern	.53	Intelligent	.35
Challenging	.52	Patient	.33
Distant	.51	Warm	.29
Demanding	.49	Comforting	.27

21. Between Jesus, Mary, and God images on one hand, and Church images on the other, the only notable correlations were between seeing the Church as challenging and seeing Jesus (.40) and Mary (.36) as challenging.

22. A detailed discussion of both the REKAP and REOI instruments, their content and development, can be found in Thompson (1982). That book details the rigorous process of scale construction, review, revision, and re-testing by which these instruments (REOI for elementary school, REKAP for high school) were produced. During the development of these instruments, constant advice was sought from educational and testing specialists of the Educational Testing Service, a widely representative task force of religious educators from the United States and Canada, as well as theologians and other consultants. Heavy reliance was also placed upon documents of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops concerning religious education. Chief among these was *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States* (1979; Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference).

23. Differences on gender by premarital sex, $p<.02$.

24. For further information concerning the nature of extrinsic religiousness, see Spilka et al. (1985), chapter 3.

25. See Hoge, D. R., McGuire, K., Stratman, B. F, & Illig, A. A. (1981). *Converts, dropouts, returnees: A study of religious change among Catholics.* New York: The Pilgrim Press.

Chapter 3

1. Except as otherwise noted, all question numbers in this chapter refer to the student questionnaire.

2. Students were also given the opportunity to indicate whether a particular topic was "particularly interesting" to them, but those ratings on every item (excluding taking tests) ranged between 24% and 34% of the students expressing interest in the area, with little or no variance by gender, family composition, or grade.

3. Gender differences in coverage of career choices, $p<.02$.

4. In the present instance, several respondents answered Student Q89 ("Is there anything that you feel was left out . . .) "Yes" and then changed their answer to "No." One possible reason for that was they found that, if they said yes, they were supposed to write an answer about what was left out, and rather than write such explanation, they preferred to change their answer. There is, of course, no evidence that this was actually the case, but it is a plausible explanation for changing that particular answer.

5. See McGuire, W. J. (1985). Attitudes and attitude Change In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson, *Handbook of social psychology (3rd ed.): Volume II, Special fields and applications,* pp. 233-346. New York: Random House.

Chapter 4

1. See, for example, Benson, P.L., Yeager, R.J., Wood, P.K., Guerra, Y,0 M.J., & Manno, B.V. (1986). *Catholic high schools: Their impact on low-income students.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

2. The alternative to this "many-to-one" match is to analyze variable interrelationships based on parish means. We rejected this latter approach because of the small N in each parish and the inconsistent percents of males, females, under 15, and over 15 across the sample parishes.

3. For both samples, correlations of .20 or greater are significant at the .001 level.

4. See the references cited in note 11, chapter 2.

5. These findings may seem to be in contrast with some of the percentage data presented in chapter 2. However, those data were based on the one or two "highest" response categories in each case. When the mean response across all categories (for example, from "Very Close" to "Not At All") are examined, the apparent decline in religiousness noted in chapter 2 is much less marked.

6. $r = .45$ ($p<.001$).

7. The technique is stepwise multiple regression.

8. R^2 is in the range of .20 to .35, depending on the outcome measure under examination.

APPENDIX

A

Effective Parish Religious Education Programs: A View from the Field

This view of effective parish religious education (PRE) programs is based on reports of site visits to 20 selected parishes around the country. Largely qualitative and impressionistic, it presents a discussion of various characteristics and aspects of effective PRE programs as observed in these parishes and summarized by the research teams. It is condensed from more than 500 pages of notes from the site visitors, who observed a great richness and diversity in these programs.

The observations of the site visitors are examined under three major topics: Parish Context, Catechetical Process, and Program Variables.

Parish Context

A preliminary generalization about these effective programs is that they appeared to be successful because they were embedded in strong, vital parish faith communities. Such communities appear to provide the necessary context in which catechetical programs can hope to have an impact. It was the experience of the on-site visitors that all these parishes manifested a high degree of quality worship and community prayer, shared responsibility, planning, and collaboration in the total parish life and ministry. The effective catechetical program is usually the by-product of a healthy parish life.

The site visits revealed two common characteristics in the parishes that had successful PRE programs:

1) A significant number of people in the parish community beyond the formal leadership shared a sense of responsibility for the program.

2) Some conscious vision was guiding the program, and the process of planning was related to that vision. Many of the parishes that were visited had a formal, written mission or vision statement for their PRE program.

In general, people seemed to use two kinds of languages to talk about religious education programs, one educational and the other catechetical. We found that those programs that were self-consciously catechetical were much more likely to use pastoral and theological language to articulate their vision and purpose. Programs that were more educational in orientation used a more consciously educational language. The choice of the program approach was, in turn, related to the history and training

of the people responsible for programs. We found very successful programs using each of these approaches and terminologies.

In the interview process, the significant historical events of parish life and the origins of the current parish religious education program were investigated. The present organization of many of these programs was the result of a crisis in the parish involving a change of priests or directors of religious education (DREs). One effective response to such a parish crisis was to place responsibility for PRE on a larger number of people in the parish community, thereby increasing parish involvement in and commitment to the program. Another approach to the crisis was to use it as motivation to examine critically the program goals. Although these processes were generally quite informal, it was clear that many of the people who guided these parishes in time of crisis encouraged reflection rather than immediate action. The results were long-term parish consensus concerning PRE and new programs of high quality.

We shall now examine some significant, specific aspects of parish life as they relate to the catechetical program.

Catechesis and Liturgy

A consistent finding from our visits was that most successful PRE programs appear to utilize the liturgical events in the parish as rich catechetical opportunities in the religious education of both young children and adolescents. This occurs in four broad categories of liturgical activities: sacramental preparations, liturgical planning, Sunday liturgies, and retreats.

Religious education aims at fostering a Christian lifestyle. Sacramental preparation programs revolve around the major life-events. The sacramental preparations that seemed most conducive to PRE programs were those associated with the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. These life-events were used by the parishes not only as religious opportunities for reaching children and young people but as learning opportunities for the whole family. Family involvement in sacramental preparation is considerable and appears to be very productive.

The most effective programs appeared to define involvement in terms of a series of escalating stages, with parents encouraged to participate in relatively minor ways at the outset of the program and relatively major ways by the time the programs reached their term. A typical example would be a baptismal program where parents were initially directed to think in terms of the life of the children—welcoming them into the community; this might lead, however, to parent involvement in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program or in some other program that encouraged them to reflect upon their own adult experiences. Another example involved Confirmation preparation. Parents began their involvement in the program by considering appropriate activities for their sons and daughters but advanced to discussion groups with other parents, where they shared the experiences they were having with their children.

Successful programs emphasized student involvement in liturgy—both formal parish liturgies and paraliturgical celebrations. Many programs allowed students to design their own liturgies, even though there was risk of failure. A number of catechists expressed the feeling that, since everyone learns by making mistakes, especially young people, it was important to allow them to do the best they could, helping them when problems occurred. In general, it was felt that rewarding young people for helping to design insightful and prayerful liturgies was an effective educational option, in combination with their participation in other well-designed liturgies.

Another characteristic of many of the successful parish programs was their ability to attract people who had professional liturgical training and talents (e.g., liturgical musicians, artists) and to involve them in the program with catechists and the adult community.

In those parishes that had a Catholic school, the liturgical experiences also provided a bridge between school and non-school children. These two components of the parish, which otherwise might have little contact, were able to share a common expression of their faith and thereby contribute to a more cohesive community. Children from both programs were often brought together for sacramental catechesis and celebration.

Several different perspectives were noted concerning the role of Sunday liturgy and its relation to PRE. A number of the students that we spoke with in these parishes—particularly older adolescents—consider homilies at Sunday mass educational. Most students felt that the parish liturgies that they experienced were generally very good, and they were enthusiastic about attending them. Required attendance at parish liturgies within these programs was not very common, although it was clear that parents and teachers applied some subtle pressures to make sure children attended. Parishes that had good working relationships between the DRE and the Youth Ministers were particularly good at developing a core of youth leaders who would take the initiative in attending liturgies, thereby encouraging peers to attend also. Attendance at liturgies was particularly strong around confirmation time, reflecting students' responses to the enhanced motivation that surrounds that event.

In many cases, retreats seemed to be a significant and critical supplement to formal religious education classes and to liturgical events. Many were of the traditional variety where young people are separated from the rest of the community for an overnight. Several parishes incorporated retreat mornings or retreat days into the curriculum for all students. Many of the retreats seemed to be very good at stimulating the creative and insightful aspects of youthful spirituality. These parishes noted that youth retreats were the single most effective catechetical/evangelizing activity in dealing with older adolescents.

Social Justice/Christian Service Perspectives

Most PRE programs have a strong social justice and human service component. Children, and especially adolescents, are engaged in various kinds of community services as part of their sacramental training, particularly in preparation for confirmation. Even younger children are encouraged to think more in terms of the world community and international peace and justice issues.

This social justice perspective can be seen throughout most of the programs and appears to be one of the more successful aspects of the articulation and implementation of vision from the national hierarchy through diocesan offices to parish programs. We saw few programs without a significant social justice and human service component. Sometimes the educational aspect needed strengthening.

Leadership and Relationship

The first issue in PRE programs is the nature and exercise of parish catechetical leadership. It is important that the Director of Religious Education, whether a priest or professional catechist, lead and serve in a visionary and an enabling way. The best DREs understood the Church's goals for catechesis and were able to facilitate and empower as well as direct. In some ways, they operated like good community organizers, able to identify and develop resource persons within the community and help them put their gifts at the service of the program. Another aspect of strong, effective leadership is the ability to develop procedures that depend on and encourage teamwork. Within parish programs, this was done largely by tremendous attention to detail, so that volunteers did not feel overburdened or out of their depth, and all had a complete sense of their jobs. The effective leader was able to design a structure and an organization that was both very intentional in its design and very detailed in its execution. Needless to say, none of this happened quickly. We were told, time and again,

by experienced DREs that it took four to five years before they felt they had their program well in hand.

This leadership factor is related to another important issue. Successful programs were those able to solve the succession problem, which was rarely addressed before the need arose. When the program is dependent on a strong or charismatic leader, it can falter when that person leaves. In many ways, this problem is the Achilles' heel of parish catechesis.

One of the more sensitive and difficult-to-describe issues that the site visitors encountered was the relationship between priests and DREs. When these relationships were worked out successfully, the program was smooth and productive; otherwise, the program was negatively affected.

One of the challenges that this situation poses for PRE programs is to develop good models of the DRE-pastor relationship. Our observation was that positive relations between DREs and pastors were characterized by explicit job descriptions before hiring took place and, thereafter, by regular meetings for discussions between the pastor and the DRE.

There is also a need to generate better acceptance of the ministry of the DRE and provide future priests with preparation for their catechetical responsibilities.

Planning

Visitors were impressed by the vitality and apparent impact of these programs. They were, however, surprised at the low level of future planning and goal development and at the lack of clearly defined structures in some of the programs. It seemed that some parishes did not want to waste time on structures but wanted to emphasize programming instead. The visitors observed that, while this will produce results for a first generation of participants, it may not have "staying power."

This lack of attention to planning and structure was probably due, in part, to the fact that resources were stretched thin. No one had time to think seriously about goals because they were too busy working to keep the program going.

Finances

In general, and despite expectations to the contrary, we found that parish finances were not the most important element in successful PRE programs. In both wealthy and poor parish settings, we observed successful programs that seemed to hold the enthusiasm of the participants. The financial responsibility for the program was generally left in the pastor's hands. This control can turn finances into an issue, depending, again, upon the relationship between the pastor and the DRE.

One of the more important and formal financial criteria was whether or not the positions for the religious education staff were written into the parish budget. If not, the pastor maintained direct control over the program and its staff. Such control had been exercised rather abruptly in some of the parishes we visited.

It seems desirable that the financial supervision of the programs involve some parish advisory body—perhaps the financial committee called for in the new Code of Canon Law. This would insure that the issues involved are addressed in a professional manner.

While not the most important element in effectiveness, finances are very significant. Their allocation represents a parish's priorities and values. Effectiveness in catechesis demands the kind of competence in leadership and staff that can only come from serious training, and this does cost money. The dropout rate of qualified DREs, due to financial reasons, is an alarming demonstration of this truth.

Catechetical Process

In this section we will discuss the conceptual models of successful programs observed on site visits. The general model of catechetical programs that we will examine includes the cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements described in chapter four.

Cognition

The essential question asked by the site visit teams concerned the state of knowledge in these programs and who the "knowledge workers" were in most of these parishes. It was clear from many of the interviews that both teachers and students are concerned with learning the faith, the doctrine, and the history of the Catholic Church. They want to acquire that knowledge. These are relatively short programs, however, in the sense that they meet for an hour once a week during the academic year. In many ways the cognition goal of these programs seemed to be the weakest, in terms of achievement.

Generally speaking, cognitive expectations were rudimentary and were linked to sacramental preparation. Strategies such as pre-testing and post-testing were rarely employed. Overall, most programs appeared rather traditional in terms of their cognitive methodology and expectations. Some of our site visitors felt that not enough was communicated about the core of the Catholic faith, and that children were not being taught the religious language and concepts of Catholicism. Generally, we thought catechists achieved affective and behavioral goals much more effectively than cognitive ones.

Sometimes, even in the most successful parishes, we found DREs who were not fully versed in Catholic tradition, dogma, and moral teaching. Pastors were theologically educated but sometimes lacked skills at communicating or adapting this learning in an effective pastoral manner.

As to who the appropriate "knowledge worker" in these parishes should be, one thing is absolutely clear. Every PRE program needs someone who is the "cognitive expert" if it is to succeed as a true educational endeavor. This poses challenges to seminaries in terms of how theology is taught and learned, and to academic and diocesan programs of formation for parish DREs.

One problem appearing in many of these programs is the lack of information and documentation about what the children have had in previous years. If they have been in the same parish, someone might know, but if they were in different programs, there is no way to know what they have experienced. Meaningful evaluation of the cognitive aspect of PRE programs will also have to include an appreciation of what each student brings to the program.

Affective Goals

To most of the observers, the formational aspect of these religious education programs was much more impressive and coherent. We spent time with people who were praying together and reflecting upon their lives in a religious fashion, and with children who were able to experience their faith in some very direct and powerful ways. One of the real riches of these programs is the multiplicity of ways in which they allow people to engage in these kinds of reflection. We found that permission to speak religiously from one's feelings and pray in groups was quite common. The use of drama, ritual, and symbolism was often truly creative. This appears to be a real strength, particularly among the more successful programs. The imagery of the drama and the stories that are told are, clearly, very powerful for the children and may well be an area for further investigation.

Some of the minority parishes that we visited were particularly strong in using song, choral singing, and group experiences of liturgy to foster the formation process. This area appears to be one in which the minority parishes really had substantial contribution to make to the larger parochial context. It was particularly noticeable since the minority parishes were larger in geographical region than the typical Catholic parish. People came a long way to go to church, and the fact they did so was further evidence of the power the faith had in their lives.

Sharing religious and human experiences seemed to be the single most important aspect of formation for most of the students we talked to. Interestingly, this formation of the faith character very seldom, if ever, came up in discussion with parents. They were much more interested in cognition and behavior; the catechists in the programs were much more interested in the formation process. Here, again, is an area where the program and the family could use more integration.

Behavioral Goals

Many times we heard a variation on the theme "they act in such-and-such a way because they are Christians." It is rooted in the conviction that there is a right and appropriate Christian way to behave—a Christian lifestyle. This is stressed time and time again at all levels of the program. It starts out in the very lowest grades with a concern for behavioral reverence in the Church and is stressed in the higher grades in terms of community service, helping and sharing with other people.

One of the most impressive elements of successful socialization could be seen in rural areas where people had to come considerable distances to participate in parish life. They did so willingly and enthusiastically. An additional component in many of the successful programs is a stress on intergenerational helping, very useful in the lives of both younger and older people.

Most of these successful parishes, as we mentioned earlier, have a good deal of generativity as part of their parish history. As the youth grow older—going through the program, moving into college and out—many of them stay around. From this core a number of parishes draw staff for their religious education programs. A factor in most of these programs, which seemed to have considerable impact on the socialization of young people, was how much adults in the program trusted the young to be independent. Once again, the theme of independent activity emerges in these programs, except that instead of being addressed to catechists, this time it is addressed to students. Students are allowed to design their own liturgies, even though they might do it poorly. This is a remarkable learning experience for them. Students are allowed to design and engineer their own service activities, even though they might do it poorly. This, too, is a tremendous learning experience.

When asked about the most successful aspects of the program, most staff and parents named affective goals first, behavioral goals second, and cognition third. Observers concurred with this judgment.

Program Variables

Training of Catechists

Perhaps the most important aspect of the program at the parish level is the way in which catechists are trained and the amount of training they receive. Over the years, one of the major criticisms of parish based religious education has been the lack of training of the volunteer catechist. There is evidence that, in successful programs, this concern is being addressed, but much still needs to be done.

We found that, to recruit catechetical volunteers, many parishes were able to draw on their lay ministry formation programs, as well as parish adult formation programs

like RENEW and retreats. Other parishes approached part-time teachers and people who had teaching experience, involving them in catechetical work and giving them training as lay ministers.

Three specific strategies regarding catechetical training were quite common: certification as a master catechist or a trained catechist by the diocese, regional workshops at colleges or universities that were available to the catechetical staff, and constant in-service training programs at the parish level which were run by skilled professionals. Of these three, the most common appeared to be certification by the diocese.

In those dioceses that had thorough, well-planned certification programs, certified catechists were self-confident, competent catechetical professionals. This is probably the single most important contribution that dioceses can make to catechetical programs at local parish levels. Our observation was that diocesan master catechist training programs significantly improve both the self-image of the catechists and the programs they teach.

Curriculum

There is no nationally mandated or authorized curriculum for PRE programs in the United States. These programs represent a wide variety of approaches to catechetical content and method. In Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1979), chapter five is devoted to "Principal Elements of the Christian Message for Catechesis." It lists the basic doctrinal and moral teachings that should be included in a total religion curriculum. There is, however, no national system of implementation of this kind of systematic catechesis, nor any means of verification. A large number of catechetical publishing companies produce the curriculum materials used in parish programs. Parishes are generally free to choose from among them the textbook series which they prefer. Many dioceses issue lists of "approved" series.

In the programs we observed, there was some diversity of approach to curriculum design and choice. Stability of curriculum use was one of the hallmarks of the majority of parishes visited. In one parish, the Board of Religious Education had chosen the series, and, if the DRE wished to change it at any grade level, she or he had to document its deficiencies for the Board and indicate how other materials would remedy them. In several parishes a committee of catechists, students, and families evaluated the materials; in another parish a public parish hearing was held, at which text changes were individually considered. The involvement of an informed, responsible parish Board or committee appeared to prevent constant changes in curriculum when personnel changed. In this way, there was some guarantee that, across the grades, all of the content would be covered. A few of these parishes, however, did "mix and match" texts from different publishers to obtain what they judged was an appropriate curriculum.

Many catechists communicated to the site visitors their feeling that there was too much material or too many activities for the volunteer catechist to integrate into a limited class schedule. This seemed to highlight the fact that teacher training and support is as crucial an issue as curriculum choice. Sometimes catechists were so intent on carrying out an activity suggested in the Teacher's Manual that they did not adequately make the connection with the doctrinal teaching it was intended to reinforce.

Regular assessment of the curriculum by the whole staff was carried out by many of the visited parishes. One parish held semi-annual evaluation sessions at which teachers and the DRE critiqued the overall curriculum.

Scope and sequence charts provided by the publishers were most helpful. However, some catechists did not seem to be aware of them. They are very helpful in

showing how a whole series, properly used, will provide the systematic and complete catechesis that the Church expects from a parish program.

Affective and lifestyle outcomes are at least as important for religious formation as cognitive outcomes. The parishes visited seem to have intuitively grasped this truth; major attention was given to fostering a life and practice of prayer and worship, and helping students to "do the loving and generous thing" in their conduct. The level of formal moral education with older students, however, often seemed shallow.

Pedagogical Ingredients

Teaching techniques were among the most innovative aspects of successful programs. It was clear that some of the catechists were extremely experienced and creative when it came to devising ways of capturing the interest of students at different age levels and of communicating program content. If there is one overall strength of successful programs, it is the experience and quality of the volunteer staff.

Teaching techniques shared by successful programs at both the elementary school and high school level included creative ways for welcoming students into the class at each program session and ways of setting the tone and the mood for the program. The hospitality of the people in the program made the students feel as though each session was going to be a new and lively experience. The tone of the various class sessions was pleasurable, even though it involved serious matters. Observers discussed the programs with the students and sat in on various classes. All were impressed by the way these programs combined reverence and playfulness in a limited time period.

Another aspect of successful teaching, seemingly shared by these programs, was their ability to develop team teaching techniques—creating backups and partners for each teaching position. The best programs had two to three volunteer catechists available for every teaching slot. Obviously, they were not all equally well-trained; a common strategy was to assign the more senior teachers the first slot and give them an apprentice junior teacher as a backup so they could learn from each other.

The successful programs were also very good at utilizing outside resources—creative artists and local talent—to help with the experiential aspects of the program. They were also able to use diocesan resources in the planning and evaluation of their programs. The positive contribution of the diocesan religious education office to parish programs was frequently cited.

The parish priests played a variety of roles. To the extent that the priest was restricted to being a disciplinarian, his role was quite narrow, but to the extent that he was a theological resource, his role was quite extensive. Several programs had what were called "priest projects"—projects designed by and negotiated between the DRE and the local priests. This approach provided both the priest and the people in the program with an understanding of what their relationship over the coming academic year was to be.

One of the challenges for the catechist, which all of the programs mentioned, was the difficulty in involving the young people once they were at the junior high and high school level. Often, Confirmation was the end of formal religious instruction. The successful programs were able to take these adolescents and engage them in discussion of their own life experiences, in the light of Christian faith and values. The context was non-threatening, and the young people felt that someone was truly interested in listening to them. Whether it was intentional or not, students were guided to use the tools of their religious traditions as they reflected on their own experiences. The youth involved in the programs at this stage said that "we can talk about our feelings here," and they clearly felt enough at ease to reveal parts of themselves that they didn't think they could talk about at home or, perhaps, with their friends.

One of the interesting aspects of the conversations with the people in the success-

ful programs was their evaluation of whether or not professional teachers were a benefit to the programs. Clearly, some felt that professional teachers were of benefit since they could control a class and were professionally trained in methods of teaching. Others, however, particularly those with a more catechetical point of view, felt that sometimes professional teachers were not as oriented to facilitating honest student discussion and growing in faith with the students. In addition, religious educators felt the need to tap special resources outside their own group. Because of the voluntary nature of the programs and the limited amount of time people have, recruiting of this kind was clearly a problem for even the most successful programs.

Catechist Recruitment

While we have called these catechists volunteers, this refers primarily to their financial status. Volunteering is not the typical way in which people become involved in these programs. Rather, they are sought out, selected, pursued, invited, and otherwise tracked down by the DREs.

It is questionable whether the skills necessary to discern high quality potential catechists can be taught. The experienced DREs in the successful programs we visited seem to have the ability to discern potential catechists in their parish community. They seem always alert to potential catechists among their acquaintances, the people they meet, and people who attend meetings with them. In other words, these DREs are very adept at discerning and encouraging the ministry of catechists.

Some parishes did have a more voluntary kind of program. Each year they would post the jobs that needed to be done in the parish on a board in the back of the vestibule, and people would sign up for them. For some parishes, this worked well. An adaptation of this method was to have people fill out index cards nominating parishioners for potential roles in the parish. However, by far the largest number of catechists were enlisted by the DREs. And although this process was fairly personal, it had some generalizable characteristics. A number of catechists mentioned that DREs were very good at making them feel that their contribution was important. Volunteers were not asked to do the impossible nor to give impossible amounts of time rather, they were asked to give what they could.

One important characteristic of effective programs was their "generativity." They were able to generate catechists from both their graduates and their earlier catechetical staffs. Many catechists were people who themselves had attended PRE programs or had graduated from Catholic schools. This characteristic, "generativity," is important in any kind of program that hopes to have an impact on people and to continue over time.

Another characteristic of many of these programs was that catechists were recruited as partners. Some parishes used a "buddy system" of catechists, which encouraged mutual support and collegial catechetical development. Such a team system also allowed for greater flexibility in each individual catechist's schedule.

One of the central questions that the site visitors asked the DREs was how, if the need arose, did they decide that a specific catechist was no longer of value to the program or was not able to make a contribution and had to be dismissed. Unanimously, the DREs responded that this was a very rare occurrence and that, when it did happen, it was usually a relatively easy matter to encourage the catechist to withdraw. By that time, the catechist already knew things were not going well. Regular evaluations of catechists were held in most successful programs, but the goal of the evaluation was improvement, not subsequent dismissal. As a group, catechists in these programs appeared confident and non-threatened.

Catechists in effective programs had a strong sense of community. Their enthusiasm and camaraderie were genuine and provided an encouraging sign. Well-run PRE

programs tended to reward their catechists as a group, further strengthening their bond.

In many programs, expectations for catechists were clearly written and discussed at the beginning of the catechetical relationship, lessening the chance of misunderstanding and hurt feelings later. This kind of intentional planning is characteristic of successful programs. The more attention paid to the details of recruitment, training, and catechetical development, the better the program functions.

Theological Perspective

An important underpinning of these programs is their theological perspective. Every successful PRE program had some person competent in theology who could provide theological leadership in the program. Sometimes it was the director of religious education, sometimes it was the pastor, but there was always somebody who functioned as the "house theologian."

The role of this person cannot be overestimated. Understanding the theological principles upon which the programs are based allows for the clear articulation of program goals. This, in turn, allows for the development of confident and successful catechetical procedure. Much of the theological perspective of these programs appears to be based on experiential catechetics. This theological perspective consistently tries to tie the doctrinal content of the program to experiences in young people's lives. It appeared, however, that there could be greater concern for assuring a systematic and complete catechesis that, over all the grade levels, would touch the essential points of Catholic faith.

Many comments were made in the interviews about fundamentalists at the local level who challenged the Catholic identity of the students. This appears to be a significant national problem. Because the cognitive aspect of catechesis has been downplayed, young people are unable to respond to issues raised by fundamentalists trying to proselytize them.

With regard to doctrinal content, some catechists stressed the need for more common language and a stronger approach to content learning, while others stressed the pluralism characteristic of American Catholic theology. This tension reflects a certain ambivalence on this issue, also reflected in the American Church-at-large.

One significant theological shift in these programs is the change from people considering themselves as "belonging to the Church" to considering themselves as "being the Church." The use of the phrase "the people of God" in the documents of the Second Vatican Council appears to have inspired many catechists to present the Church as much more participatory, and, in fact, to consider themselves and their parish communities to be the Church in a much more immediate way than had previously been the case. One effect of this kind of thinking at the parish level is the strong connection that these people forge among the local Church, the family, and religious education. Conversely, some felt there was a weakening of the sense of belonging to a wider, universal Church.

Administrative Staffs

Most of the successful programs had at least one person who was responsible for the administration of the program, and frequently that person had some assistance. These people were very important. They implemented both the educational and catechetical objectives of the program in the sense that they facilitated the program and made the relationship between catechists and students much smoother. Counselors and administrative assistants in some of these programs provided a contact between the program and students outside the catechetical setting, which was very productive for the students' development.

One of the most common staff positions in effective programs was the person responsible for checking whether the students showed up at the program and for contacting parents when they did not. This position was particularly important because the person had regular contact with the families of children in the programs, especially families with marginal participation in parish life.

A critical parish staff position was that of youth minister. As far as the catechetical program was concerned, the quality of communication between the youth minister and the DRE was exceedingly important. Youth ministers were frequently very good at attracting young people to their events, and the most successful parishes had youth ministers on staff. The primary role of the youth minister in relation to the religious education program was to integrate religious education programs and other church activities in which youth were active. In the best settings, youth ministers cooperated with the DREs and the catechetical staff in a variety of events, particularly for junior high and high school people. To the extent that youth ministry is separated from religious education, both programs tend to suffer.

Ownership of Program

A widespread sense of ownership, of personal responsibility for PRE programs, often had come out of parish crises. The parish had had to deal with some educational crisis, perhaps the closing of the school, and had come away with a new religious education program which was very much theirs because they had designed, supported, and built it.

It is probably not too farfetched to say that religious education in the Catholic parish is a significant example of true lay partnership in the catechetical process. Almost all of the participants in our various meetings, whether they were catechists or DREs, pastors or parents, referred to the sense of program ownership that resulted from a crisis that originally beset the parish. While a charismatic leader was very important in drawing people together, he or she did not provide the sense of ownership that the program needed. In most of these settings, ownership began to develop after the initial period of personal leadership.

The model most often mentioned was that of the family. Just as people have a sense of ownership in their own families, the people who worked so hard in successful PRE programs had a sense of ownership in these programs. The real source of ownership appeared to stem from the independent activity that DREs gave to the catechetical staff. The one director of religious education who mentioned that she never showed someone how to do something twice was also quite insightful about this aspect of the program. She noted that the sense of independent activity was the most important aspect of training catechists, and it also had the most dramatic effect on the nature of the program.

Relation to Families

It was generally observed that the relationship between family and program was one of the most potentially important but underdeveloped aspects of PRE. Generally, it is not the object of as much planning as other aspects. The perspective found in many programs was that families were told what to do and how to do it. Part of this is due to the generally low level of catechetical awareness and development among many adult Catholics. As the self-awareness of adult Catholics is re-formed (e.g., through experiences like RENEW), a more thoughtful relationship between PRE programs and families may emerge. At present, it is often limited to involvement in sacramental preparation, as was noted earlier.

If there is need for development of both materials and strategies in these programs, the greatest urgency may lie in this relationship between family and program. From our discussions with parents, most families are supportive of the programs and

do, in fact, work hard to see that children attend. Many adults expressed a desire that the program deal with their needs more effectively. When asked whether or not they would be willing to give up an evening a week or participate in some other discussion group, however, many of them hesitated. The dilemma facing most of these programs is that, even though families say they want to be more involved, when given the opportunity many of them are not.

An interesting by-product of successful PRE programs is the bonding that occurs between the families whose children participate in the program. These families frequently get together in other settings and seem to provide the raw material for a rich community life within some of these parishes. Perhaps these are the beginnings of what some sociologists call "functional communities" in local parishes—built on programs such as religious education which involve young people and their families.

Relation to Wider Community

Catholic parishes are unique in American religious life in that they are generally geographically based, just as are the political units of our society. They are located in communities, and they frequently encapsulate already existing communities. Successful parishes seem to be aware of their location in and importance to the community. Just as the effective teacher is a self-confident teacher, assured of certain skills and methodologies, the effective parish seems to be confident of its role in the local community.

The religious education staff in the parishes we visited knew what the children did in the community, even those children who were not in their program. The program frequently was the focus of community activities; the local public high school would even check with the local religious education program to make sure their schedules did not conflict.

Frequently, also, successful religious education programs would participate in other community projects with other kinds of groups within; the city or town (e.g., soup kitchens, ecumenical walks for hunger).

One of the more sophisticated and experienced DREs, when queried about the relation between her program and the local community said, "It really helps to get your hands dirty with the community issues; that is the key to a successful program." By this she did not mean that it was an unpleasant task, but rather that one had to become involved in the give and take of the community and in the day-to-day living of community issues if one's program was to be integrated with the local community. By and large, a mark of successful programs is a very successful integration between the programs and the operation of the local community.

APPENDIX

B

NCEA Survey of Parish Catechetical Programs for Children and Young People

Survey Instrument
for
Parish Staff

DECEMBER 1985

77

Introduction

Your parish has been selected as representative of those in the nation who have a flourishing multi-level catechetical ministry for children and young people. We are sending the following survey to all of those selected parishes and we would ask that a person knowledgeable about the catechetical program be appointed to gather the information. The survey should then be returned in the envelope supplied. Thank you for your cooperation. We hope that this research will help develop an even stronger future for parish catechetical efforts by enabling us to learn how those that work well have been able to do so.

The Survey: Please be as specific as possible in your answers. If an exact figure is not available please give your best estimate and note that your answer is an estimate.

1. Please circle the title of the person who was primarily responsible for completing this survey.

Pastor.....01
Assoc. Pastor.....02
DRE.....03
Parish Council member.....04
Parish Board of Education member.....05
Finance Board member.....06
Principal of school.....07
Other (SPECIFY)_____08

---

2. Please circle the number indicating all those who participated in completing this survey

(CIRCLE AS MANY AS APPLY)

Pastor.....01
Assoc. Pastor.....02
Principal of school.....03
DRE.....04
Parish Council member.....05
Board of Education member.....06
Finance Board member.....07
Other (SPECIFY)_____08

3. Parishes sometimes have different types of groups which help guide the overall planning and coordination of their catechetical program(s). Do you have any of the following? (Please circle any that apply.)

CCD Board.....1
Education committee.....2
Parish council.....3
Other (Please describe).....4

_____

_____

---

4. Has there been a catechetical needs assessment of the parish within the past three years?

Yes.....1
No.....2
It is in process.....3
I don't know.....8

(If it resulted in a goals statement or action plan, please enclose a copy)

---

5. Is there a specific budget for the parish catechetical program(s)?

Yes.....1
No.....2
I don't know.....8

(Please enclose a copy)

---

6. If possible, please give the approximate amounts in each of the following areas of the parish budget for the current fiscal year

Total operating costs $|__|__|__|,|__|__|__|

Parish school (or) $|__|__|__|,|__|__|__|

Our parish has no school (Please Check the box.) |__|

Non-school catechetical progams of all types. $|__|__|__|,|__|__|__|

7. Are there written goals available for the catechetical programming of your parish?

Yes.....1
No.....2
It is in process.....3
I don't know.....8

---

8. Please circle the letter of all of the types or topics of adults catechetical programs that were held in your parish during the calendar year 1984.

(Please answer these for each of the types or topics circled.)

	How many such programs were there?	How many hours did the typical program run?	How many people attended the typical programs?
a. Scriptural programs	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
b. Sacramental preparation	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
c. Parenting classes	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
d. Reconciliation programs	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
e. Prayer programs	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
f. Teaching catechetical skills	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
g. Social justice programs	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
h. Peace pastoral programs	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
i. Programs on womens' issues	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|
j. Spiritual developement programs (I.e. RENEW, Christ Renews His Parish, etc.)	__| __|	__| __| __|	__| __| __|

9. Does your parish currently use the Rite of Christian Institute of Adults (RCIA)?

Yes.....1
No.....2
It is in process.....3
I don't know.....8

---

10. How many catechists are currently involved in teaching in your parish at the following levels:

Elementary (1-8) __\| __\|
Secondary (9-12) __\| __\|

A. Of this total number, how many are paid or receive a stipend for their efforts? __\| __\|

---

11. How many volunteers, ancillary personnel who are not catechists, are involved in the catechetical program in your parish at the following levels:

Elementary (1-8) __\| __\|
Secondary (9-12) __\| __\|

---

12. Is there on-going recruitment of catechists in your parish?

Yes.....1
No.....2
Don't know.....8

---

13. How many new catechists have been recruited during the last three years?

__\| __\|

---

14. Is there on-going recruitment of ancillary personnel in your parish?

Yes.....1
No.....2
I don't know.....8

---

15. How many ancillary personnel have been recruited during the last three years?

__\| __\|

16. Does your parish do any of the following by way of encouraging the recruitment of potential catechists from the parish? (Please circle one answer category for each activity)

	This is done frequently	This is done sometimes	This is not done at all
a. Invite interested parishoners to visit classes.	1	2	3
b. Invite interested parishoners to visit faculty meetings.	1	2	3
c. Communicate the catechetical program to the wider parish community.	1	2	3
d. Have certified catechists meet with potential catechists to explain the program and invite their involvement.	1	2	3
e. Invite people to participate in the catechetical program through announcements at large parish gatherings (e.g. Sunday Mass).	1	2	3

17. Please answer the following questions about catechists in your parish in general.

"Do most of your catechists. . .	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. obtain formal certification?"	1	2	8
b. take updating doctrine courses?"	1	2	8
c. take updating catechetical method courses?"	1	2	8
d. have adequate catechetical materials for their courses?"	1	2	8
e. receive at least one subscription to a catechetical journal?"	1	2	8
f. socialise with other catechists?"	1	2	8
g. avail themselves of opportunities for spiritual enrichment?"	1	2	8

21. For each of the groups listed please answer the questions across the rows.

	How many times per month do they meet?	How many catechists work with them? Number of Females	Males	How many scheduled outings do they have in a year?	Circle this number if they have a summer program.	Circle this number if they have regular service projects.	How many people are regularly in attendance?
a. Pre-schoolers	___	___	___	___	1	2	___
b. Elementary grades	___	___	___	___	1	2	___
c. Junior high schoolers	___	___	___	___	1	2	___
d. High schoolers	___	___	___	___	1	2	___
e. Young adults	___	___	___	___	1	2	___
f. Adults	___	___	___	___	1	2	___
g. Handicapped	___	___	___	___	1	2	___

IF THERE IS A PAROCHIAL SCHOOL IN THE PARISH: ANSWER #18; IF NOT, SKIP TO #19.

18. To what extent are the parish catechetical activities coordinated with the school catechetical activities?

Very much.....1
Usually.....2
Not too often.....3
Very seldom.....4
We have no school.....5

---

19. Do you have separate and district programs of catechetical instruction for the following groups? (Please circle all that apply.)

Pre-schoolers.....01
Elementary grades.....02
Junior High level.....03
High schoolers.....04
Young adults.....05
Adults.....06
Handicapped (i.e. deaf, blind, etc.).....07

---

20. Overall, how would you characterize the level of diocesan support that is available to catechists in your parish?

Very high.....1
Moderately high.....2
Average.....3
Moderately low.....4
Very low.....5

22. Which of the following materials are available in your parish for catechetical instruction. (CIRCLE AS MANY AS APPLY)

Records.....01
Audio tapes.....02
Video tapes.....03
Opaque projectors.....04
Filmstrips.....05
Slides.....06
16mm films.....07
Overhead transparency.....08

23. Do you think that the parish liturgies reinforce and complement the goals of the parish catechetical programming?

Yes.....1
No.....2
I can't answer.....3

24. How would you rate the cooperation among the various people responsible for catechesis in the parish, in all its forms?

Very high.....1
Moderately high.....2
Average.....3
Moderately low.....4
Very low.....5

25. For each of the catechists in your parish program, starting with the oldest in terms of age, please answer the following questions.

	Age	Year of Certification	Male/Female	Year began working in catechetics in this parish	Number of post-certification hours of catechetical training	Grade being taught
Oldest . . .	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___
Next	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___
Next	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___
Next	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___
Next	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___
Next	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___
Next	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___
Next	___ ___	___ ___ ___ ___	1 2	1 9 ___ ___	___ ___ ___	___

APPENDIX

C

NCEA Survey of Parish Catechetical Programs for Children and Young People

Survey Instrument
for
Students in Grades Five to Twelve

DECEMBER 1985

STUDENT SURVEY

This survey is being given to some of the students in your parish catechetical programs. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose of the survey is to find out how you feel about the program so that programs like this can be improved. We need your help in this important project and we appreciate your taking the time to complete this survey. After you complete the questionnaire place it in the accompanying envelope and return it. It will not be opened by anyone in your parish, and no one who knows you personally will see it. We will begin with some questions about you and what you're like. Each question will have its own directions, but in general just circle the number of the answer you want to give.

1. Please put the year in which you were born in these spaces.

1	9		

---

2. Please put your Zip Code in these spaces. (If you don't know it ask your parents).

---

3. How long have you been in the religious education program in this parish?

Less than one year.....1
Between one and three years.....2
Between three and five years.....3
More than five years.....4

---

4. Check the answer that is true for you:

I live with both my parents _____
I live only with my mother _____
I live only with my father _____
I live with a guardian _____

5. What is the highest level of schooling your mother has completed? Please circle only one number.

She completed grade school.....01
She had some high school.....02
She graduated from high school.....03
She had some college.....04
She graduated from college.....05
She had some schooling after college...06
She completed a Master's or Doctor's degree or has a professional degree like a doctor or lawyer.....07
This question does not apply to me.....08
I do not know the answer.....98

---

6. What is the highest level of schooling your father has completed? Please circle only one number.

He completed grade school.....01
He had some high school.....02
He graduated from high school.....03
He had some college.....04
He graduated from college.....05
He had some schooling after college....06
He completed a Master's or Doctor's degree or has a professional degree like a doctor or lawyer.....07
This question does not apply to me.....08
I do not know the answer.....98

---

7. What grade in school are you now in?

Fifth.....1
Sixth.....2
Seventh.....3
Eighth.....4
Ninth.....5
Tenth.....6
Eleventh.....7
Twelfth.....8

8. Are you a . . .

Female.....1
Male.....2

---

9. Usually, how often do you attend Mass?

Every Sunday.....1
About 2 or 3 times a month.....2
About once a month.....3
Several times a year.....4
Hardly ever at all.....5

---

10. When you go to Mass do you usually go with your family or with friends or alone?

Usually with someone in my family.....1
Usually with friends.....2
Usually alone.....3
I do not have a usual pattern of going to Mass.....4

---

11. How much homework do you usually do for an average school night?

Less than a half hour.....1
About an hour.....2
About two hours.....3
About three hours.....4
More than three hours.....5
I hardly ever have homework.....6

---

12. How much television do you usually watch on a school day?

A half hour or less.....1
About an hour.....2
About two hours.....3
More than two hours.....4
I don't watch television on school days.....5

---

13. How often do you read about religious subjects outside of religion class?

Often.....1
Occasionally.....2
Never.....3

14. Which of the following have you used to deepen your religious knowledge?

Catholic newspaper.....1
The Bible.....2
Religious books.....3
Religious TV programs.....4
None of the above.....5

---

15. Some families pray together and some do not. Not counting praying before meals does your family ever pray together?

No, hardly ever.....1
Yes, for special occasions.....2
Yes, pretty often.....3
Yes, once in a while.....4

---

16. Not counting praying before meals, do you ever pray just by yourself?

No, hardly ever.....1
Yes, for special occasions.....2
Yes, pretty often.....3
Yes, once in a while.....4

---

17. Different families have different way of doing things. Think of the times your family gets together for dinner. Do you usually pray or not, and if you do what is it like? Please circle only one number?

We usually do not pray before dinner....1
We usually have a short prayer.....2
We usually have a long prayer where we thank God and ask him for special things.....3
We do not have a regular way of doing this.....4

---

18. About how often does your family get together and talk about God, the Bible, the parish or other religious things?

We hardly ever do this.....1
Almost every day.....2
About 2 or 3 times a week.....3
About once a week.....4
Less than once a week.....5

-5-

19. Here are some of the ways that different people pray. How often, if ever, do you use any of these ways?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all
A. With my own words	1	2	3	4
B. Like I am talking with a friend	1	2	3	4
C. By asking for things I need	1	2	3	4
D. By giving thanks	1	2	3	4
E. By using prayers from books or from my memory	1	2	3	4
F. By listening to music	1	2	3	4
G. By reading the Bible	1	2	3	4
H. By thinking of other people who need God's help	1	2	3	4
I. By thinking of some special religious person like Jesus, Mary or a saint	1	2	3	4
J. By imagining that I am with God and talking directly	1	2	3	4

20. When you think about God, how likely are each of these images to come to your mind?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not too likely	Not at all likely
Judge	1	2	3	4
Protector	1	2	3	4
Savior	1	2	3	4
Lover	1	2	3	4
Master	1	2	3	4
Mother	1	2	3	4
Redeemer	1	2	3	4
Creator	1	2	3	4
Father	1	2	3	4
Friend	1	2	3	4

-6-

21. When you think about Jesus, how likely are each of these images to come to your mind?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not too likely	Not at all likely
Gentle	1	2	3	4
Stern	1	2	3	4
Warm	1	2	3	4
Distant	1	2	3	4
Intelligent	1	2	3	4
Demanding	1	2	3	4
Patient	1	2	3	4
Irrelevant	1	2	3	4
Challenging	1	2	3	4
Comforting	1	2	3	4
Unimportant	1	2	3	4
Loving	1	2	3	4

22. When you think of Mary the mother of Jesus how likely are each of these images to come to mind?

BEGIN DECK 06

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not too likely	Not at all likely
Gentle	1	2	3	4
Stern	1	2	3	4
Warm	1	2	3	4
Distant	1	2	3	4
Intelligent	1	2	3	4
Demanding	1	2	3	4
Patient	1	2	3	4
Irrelevant	1	2	3	4
Challenging	1	2	3	4
Comforting	1	2	3	4
Unimportant	1	2	3	4
Loving	1	2	3	4

23. When you think of the Catholic Church how likely are these images to come to your mind?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not too likely	Not at all likely
The true church	1	2	3	4
Challenging	1	2	3	4
Judgmental	1	2	3	4
Helpful to others	1	2	3	4
Tries hard	1	2	3	4
Distant	1	2	3	4
Against nuclear war	1	2	3	4
Open to women	1	2	3	4
A close family	1	2	3	4
Run by priests	1	2	3	4
Opposed to other churches	1	2	3	4

24. How close would you say that you feel to the Catholic Church at this time in your life?

Very close — Neutral — Not close at all

1 2 3 4 5

25. How close would you say you feel to God at this time of your life?

Very close — Neutral — Not close at all

1 2 3 4 5

26. How close would you say you feel to your parish at this time in your life?

Very close — Neutral — Not close at all

1 2 3 4 5

27. If you are in grades 4 through 8, please answer this question; if not, please skip to the next question, number 28. For each of the following situations, decide how right or wrong you think it is. (PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH FITS YOUR ANSWER FOR EACH SITUATION).

	Very right	Right	Not Sure	Wrong	Very Wrong
A. You are in one of your classes at school. The teacher is trying to get all the kids to quit talking and running around so the class can learn something. Some kids ignore the teacher and keep on fooling around. How right or wrong are they?	1	2	3	4	5
B. Tracy thinks that shoplifting (stealing something) from a big store is not so bad because, "they will never miss it." She steals a $25 radio from a large department store. How right or wrong is it for her to steal the radio?	1	2	3	4	5
C. One day Mary saw Linda take $5 from a teacher's purse. After school Mary told the teacher what Linda had done. How right or wrong was it for Mary to tell the teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
D. Gary is 12. His parents expect him to do his homework. Sometimes he lies to his parents and tells them he has done his homework when he really hasn't. He does this so that his parents won't keep asking him about his homework. How right or wrong is Gary to lie to his parents about this?	1	2	3	4	5
E. Jim is 13. Sometimes he and his friends get together and drink a couple of cans of beer. How right or wrong are they to do this?	1	2	3	4	5
F. The Olsons are a white family who live in a neighborhood of mostly white people. A black family is considering buying a house nearby. The Olsons are trying to stop the black family from moving in. How right or wrong is it for the Olsons to do this?	1	2	3	4	5

28. If you are in grades 9 through 12, please answer this question; if not please skip to the next question, number 29. For each of the following situations, decide how right or wrong you think it is. (PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH FITS YOUR ANSWER FOR EACH SITUATION).

	Very right	Right	Not Sure	Wrong	Very Wrong
A. Tracy thinks that shoplifting from a big store is not so bad because, "they'll never miss it." She steals a $25 radio from a large department store. How right or wrong is it for her to steal the radio?.....	1	2	3	4	5
B. Gary is 12. His parents expect him to do his homework. Sometimes he lies to his parents and tells them he has done his homework when he really hasn't. He does this so that his parents won't keep asking him about his homework. How right or wrong is Gary to lie to his parents?.....	1	2	3	4	5
C. Alice, who is 15, didn't think she would get pregnant, but the doctor said she was. She decided she did not want to have the baby so she went to another doctor and had an abortion. How right or wrong was it for her to have this abortion?.....	1	2	3	4	5
D. Jim is 13. Sometimes he and his friends get together and drink a couple of cans of beer. How right or wrong are they to do this?.....	1	2	3	4	5
E. Tom and Sue are both 15. They have known each other for two years and have been going steady for several months. They say they love each other. Sometimes now they "go all the way," that is, have sexual intercourse. How right or wrong is it for them to have sexual intercourse?.....	1	2	3	4	5
F. Margie Smith believes that communism is very evil and that therefore the United States has a right to use nuclear bombs against their cities.....	1	2	3	4	5

Now we would like you to answer some questions about your catechetical program specifically. Think of the program in this parish when you answer. Even if you are new to the program try and answer as best you can.

29. Overall, how would you rate this catechetical program? Do you like it very much or not?

I like it very much — Neutral — I do not like it at all

01 02 03 04 05 06 07

30. How would you rate the following aspects of this program? (Circle 5 if this aspect does not apply to your program).

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Does not apply
A. Books and other reading materials used.....	1	2	3	4	5
B. The catechist's attitude toward the students.....	1	2	3	4	5
C. Presentations by the catechist...	1	2	3	4	5
D. Guest speakers.....	1	2	3	4	5
E. Films, slides or other visuals...	1	2	3	4	5
F. Music that we perform.....	1	2	3	4	5
G. Liturgies.....	1	2	3	4	5
H. Music that we listen to.....	1	2	3	4	5
I. Discussions and group activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
J. Learning games and role playing.....	1	2	3	4	5
K. Opportunities for prayer.....	1	2	3	4	5
L. Student attendance.....	1	2	3	4	5

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements as they apply to your program?

	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Neutral	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
31. The catechist really understands me and my life	1	2	3	4	5
32. The catechist challenges me to really think about what it means to be a Catholic	1	2	3	4	5
33. The catechist does not know what it is like to be my age these days	1	2	3	4	5
34. The catechist has very high expectations for what we can do in this program	1	2	3	4	5
35. I would recommend this program to my friends who are not in it	1	2	3	4	5
36. The catechist seems to like me and my friends	1	2	3	4	5
37. My parents and I often talk about what I am learning in this program	1	2	3	4	5
38. The catechist tries to keep in touch with us outside of our sessions	1	2	3	4	5
39. The catechist tries to be aware of what type of family I am from and what my life at home is like	1	2	3	4	5
40. The catechist is not really very enthusiastic about this program	1	2	3	4	5
41. Most students would not attend this program if their parents did not make them come	1	2	3	4	5

42. Does your catechist ever ask about your experiences and try to get you to think about them in terms of what you are learning in your sessions?

Almost every class.....1
Every other class or so.....2
In a few classes.....3
Hardly ever.....4

43. Does your catechist ever discuss things directly with the parents of the students, for example at a conference or regular meeting?

Yes.....1
No.....2

Different catechetical programs teach different things. Please circle whether it is true or false that your program teaches each of the following things. Also please circle the number 3 if the topic is particularly interesting to you.

"My catechetical program . . .

	True	False	This is a particularly interesting topic
44. helps me to live a good life in the world today."	1	2	3
45. uses Old Testament stories from the Bible."	1	2	3
46. helps me to know and understand myself better."	1	2	3
47. helps improve parent-teen communication."	1	2	3
48. uses stories from the New Testament about Jesus, the apostles, etc."	1	2	3
49. teaches general ideas about love and Christianity."	1	2	3
50. teaches the meaning of the sacraments."	1	2	3
51. teaches the meaning of God's life in us."	1	2	3
52. helps me read and understand the Bible."	1	2	3
53. teaches the things you have to believe in order to be a Catholic."	1	2	3
54. teaches about getting along with other people, about friendship and communicating."	1	2	3
55. teaches about relating to the opposite sex and about dating."	1	2	3
56. teaches how to make moral decisions."	1	2	3
57. teaches us about specific moral issues like abortion, nuclear disarmament and poverty."	1	2	3
58. gives us information about other religions."	1	2	3
59. teaches the religious value of being a unique person."	1	2	3

(continued)

"My catechetical program . . .

	True	False	This is a particularly interesting topic
60. teaches material about sexuality which shows its proper place in human life."	1	2	3
61. has tests and/or quizzes about what we learn."	1	2	3
62. encourages us to write or tell stories about our own experiences."	1	2	3
63. teaches about the history of the Catholic Church."	1	2	3
64. teaches us about the history of our own parish."	1	2	3
65. teaches us how the Catholic Church is governed (e.g., Pope bishops)	1	2	3
66. teaches us different ways of praying."	1	2	3
67. teaches us how to make career choices."	1	2	3
68. helps us deal with religious doubts."	1	2	3
69. teaches us about the religious life such as the life of a priest, sister or brother."	1	2	3
70. teaches about the evil of racial hatred."	1	2	3
71. teaches us that we are responsible for taking care of the poor."	1	2	3

Some students' parents or guardians are very involved in their catechetical program and others are less involved. In general how involved would you say yours are?

72. Mother . . .

Very involved — Not at all involved

01 02 03 04 05 06 07

73. Father . . .

Very involved — Not at all involved

01 02 03 04 05 06 07

Here are a number of statements which may or may not apply to your catechetical program. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of them.

	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Neutral	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
74. Most students really like attending the sessions	1	2	3	4	5
75. Our program is good at using our own experiences to teach us	1	2	3	4	5
76. The program is not rigid, it is flexible and open to new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
77. The sessions are usually fun and enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5
78. I have learned many new things about my religion	1	2	3	4	5
79. Sessions do not meet often enough	1	2	3	4	5
80. There is not enough time for discussion	1	2	3	4	5
81. Students frequently talk about what they learned in sessions when they get outside	1	2	3	4	5
82. This experience will have an importan influence on me when I am an adult	1	2	3	4	5
83. Many of my friends attend these sessions	1	2	3	4	5
84. Sometimes we go to church as part of the program	1	2	3	4	5
85. The kind of religion taught in these sessions is real and practical	1	2	3	4	5
86. If I have children when I grow up I want them to have a program like this one	1	2	3	4	5
87. The idea in the program is that how we live is more important than what we know	1	2	3	4	5
88. I think I will be a more active Catholic because of this program	1	2	3	4	5

89. Is there anything that you feel was left out of your catechetical program that you would have liked to have included?

Yes.....1
No.....2

90. If your answer was "Yes" please describe in your own words what was left out and why you feel it should be included

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

|__|__|

|__|__|

Each of us has many different experiences which have influenced the way we think about religion and the Catholic faith. How much have each of the following influenced the way you now think about these things?

		Very Much	Somewhat	Not too much	Not at all	Does not apply to me
91.	Religion classes in a Catholic school.....	1	2	3	4	5
92.	My father.....	1	2	3	4	5
93.	My mother.....	1	2	3	4	5
94.	My sisters or brothers.....	1	2	3	4	5
95.	Catechetical sessions after school or on weekends.....	1	2	3	4	5
96.	My friends.....	1	2	3	4	5
97.	Retreats, encounter groups or prayer groups.....	1	2	3	4	5
98.	Homilies at Mass.....	1	2	3	4	5
99.	Reading on my own.....	1	2	3	4	5
100.	My own personal experiences.....	1	2	3	4	5
101.	A certain priest, brother or sister.....	1	2	3	4	5
102.	My grandparents.....	1	2	3	4	5
103.	Religious movies or TV programs I have seen.....	1	2	3	4	5
104.	A certain catechist.....	1	2	3	4	5
105.	A certain school teacher.....	1	2	3	4	5

People have different reasons for being a Catholic. How important are each of the following to you personally as far as being a member of the Catholic Church?

		Very	Somewhat	Not at all
106.	I was baptized as a baby.....	1	2	3
107.	Being a Catholic gives me a sense of identity.....	1	2	3
108.	My parents are Catholic so therefore so am I.....	1	2	3
109.	Going to Mass is the best way for me to worship God.....	1	2	3
110.	I like the values which the Catholic Church holds.....	1	2	3

111. Please use this space to tell us anything else you feel we should know in order to make Catholic catechetical programs as good as they can be.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

|__|__|

|__|__|

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX

D

Methodological Notes

Selection of Parishes

Selection of parishes for the study involved nomination by diocesan directors of religious education throughout the country. The catechetical criteria enunciated in *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States* (NCD), were proposed as the guidelines for that selection. The criteria offered were that a program should:

- present the principal elements of the Christian message (NCD, Ch. 5)
- orient participants for life in a worshiping community (NCD, Ch. 6)
- prepare participants for Christian social involvement (NCD, Ch. 7)
- respect the religious and human development of participants (NCD, Ch. 8)

In addition, the Advisory Task Force stipulated that the programs nominated should:

- have strong parental involvement in the catechetical process
- have been in operation from four to five years
- evidence support of the catechetical program by the pastoral team
- include life-long learning opportunities for all parishioners
- recruit qualified volunteer teachers and retain them.

The form used for nominating parishes is included below as Exhibit D1. In part four, various options were used to describe the characteristics of the parish.

Eighty-three dioceses accepted the invitation to nominate parishes, and 258 parishes were nominated for the study. These parishes received the Staff and Student Survey instruments reproduced in Appendices B and C. Of the total number, 146 parishes returned the complete set of surveys; they are listed in Appendix E.

From the total number of parishes nominated, 20 were selected for on-site visits. This selection process was conducted by William McCready of the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago, Illinois. It involved stratifying parishes according to the categories listed in question number four of the nomination form and then selecting parishes from each group in order to have a sample that would be as representative of the variety of American Catholic parishes as possible.

Three visitation teams of six persons were trained at a two-day orientation session conducted in Washington, DC. Each team included a social science researcher and a person trained and experienced in catechesis.

EXHIBIT D1 Nomination Form for Parish Religious Education Study

1. PARISH NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

   ADDRESS: _____

   CONTACT PERSON: _____

2. Does the parish have a full-time religious education coordinator? YES 1

   NO 2

3. Please rate the parish on the following characteristics:

		POOR			GOOD			EXCELLENT
a.	Extent to which families are involved in religious education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	Support from the pastoral team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	The sense of ownership of the educational ministry by the whole parish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	The extent to which the parish sees education as for everyone, not just children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	The overall awareness of social justice issues in the program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	The ability of the parish to recruit excellent volunteer teachers and keep them involved.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.	The extent to which the program fosters development of personal and living faith.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h.	The overall approach of the parish toward children under the age of 8.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.	The overall approach of the parish toward young people 8 to 14.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j.	The overall approach of the parish toward young people 15 to 19.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k.	The extent to which the parish develops a 'peacemaking' perspective as encouraged by the pastoral letter of the American bishops.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Would you please circle as many of the following items as you need to accurately describe this parish:

Middle-class 1	In the city 7
Mostly white 2	Old ethnic 8
Mostly black 3	Newly founded 9
Mostly hispanic 4	Has many economic resources 10
Well mixed 5	Has few economic resources 11
Suburban 6	

5. Does the parish have a parochial school?

Yes 1

No 2

6. Does the parish have a formal religious education program for students in elementary school who do not attend a parochial school?

Yes 1

No 2

7. Does the parish have a formal religious education program for students in high school who do not attend a parochial school?

Yes .....

No 2

8. Please list the names and addresses of parishes whose boundaries touch the parish you have named in Item #1.

The agenda prepared for the site visitors included issues relating to the parish context of the program, the actual program forms, and various catechetical models observed. This agenda is reflected in the analysis given in Appendix A

Letter Sent to the 258 Nominated Parishes.

To the Director of Religious Education:

Enclosed are the questionnaires referred to in Father Kelly's letter. The National Catholic Educational Association asks your help in obtaining a thorough and scientifically valid survey of parishes and of their students. We seek the cooperation of seven of your students, and some of your own time as well, in filling out the enclosed questionnaires. The white questionnaires are to be filled out by seven of your students selected according to the instructions in the paragraph immediately below; the blue questionnaire is to be filled out by you. All the questions are to be answered by circling a number, a letter, or a word, as indicated, or by filling in a blank with an amount or a brief statement.

Selection of Students

Please select seven students to participate by the procedures described here. It is important for the study's validity that you do so. (Incidentally, other parishes are being instructed to select a somewhat different composition of students and we expect to end up with about the same number of boys and girls and the same number under and over age 15.) For your parish we would like you to make a list of all your students and cut the list in strips, place them in a receptacle, and draw names, one at a time, until you have drawn:

2 girl(s) under age 15
2 boy(s) age 15 or older
1 boy(s) under age 15
2 girl(s) age 15 or older)

If you draw a name for a category that you have already filled, just put it aside and continue drawing until you have selected the seven students from the four categories as requested.

Instructions for the Students

Please ask the seven selected students to help you and NCEA collect information designed to identify aspects of various programs that have proven successful in contributing to catechetical effectiveness. This information will assist us in preparing materials to enable all parishes to examine and improve their catechetical programs.

Please provide each of the selected students with one of the white questionnaires and one of the brown envelopes provided in your packet. Ask each student to fill out his or her questionnaire in private, place the completed questionnaire in the brown envelope provided, seal the envelope, and return it to you. Please tell them that when you receive the individual questionnaires you will place them, still sealed, in a large, prestamped envelope and send them to the survey sponsors, and be certain that the students know that their privacy will be protected by this procedure.

Instructions for Returning the Questionnaires

After you have filled out your own (blue) questionnaire, please consider whether you are willing to have your parish identified on the cover of the questionnaire. You may, of course, participate in the survey anonymously, but having the parish name associated with the questionnaire may offer an opportunity to improve the quality of the data from this survey. That is, should any of the answers to the questions prove to be ambiguous, we will be able to seek clarifications in a follow-up contact.

If you are willing to have your parish identified, please add parish name, address, and phone number to the front cover of the blue questionnaire. If you do identify your

parish, we will use this information only for the research purpose described above. In all other ways, your privacy will be protected, and your parish name will not be identified with the data you provide in any public presentation.

If you wish to submit your completed parish questionnaire anonymously, just return it as is, but please fill out and return the enclosed postcard as well, mailing it separately. In this way, you can guarantee the confidentiality of your answers, and we can tell which parishes have not yet filled out their questionnaires.

Finally, please place your own (blue) questionnaire, along with the seven student questionnaires in their separate sealed envelopes, into the large stamped envelope addressed to Father Kelly and put the package in the mail to him.

This study is the first ever conducted of parish-based religious education programs. As such, it provides the first chance to have people actually involved in religious education in the parishes provide systematic information about their programs. Your cooperation is critical, as is that of your students. Thank you for participating, and thank you for encouraging the selected students to complete and return their surveys.

Procedures Used for Coding Responses to Open-Ended Questions

(Student Q90 and Q111)

When faced with coding a large number of responses to open-ended questions, one must deal with issues concerning what to include, what to exclude, and how to collapse the categories that the respondents have generated. What follows is a discussion of the procedures and considerations that were involved in coding the open-ended responses in the student questionnaire.

Two questions on the survey instrument were open-ended: question 90, which asked whether there was "anything that you felt was left out of your catechetical program that you would like to have included," and question 111, which asked the respondent to mention "anything else you feel we should know in order to make Catholic catechetical programs as good as they can be."

A maximum of two responses for each question was coded. In a small number of cases this meant that a certain amount of information was lost when additional comments were not coded. In the majority of cases, it simply meant that "no answer" was entered twice instead of once. In order to generate the coding categories, approximately half of all the student questionnaires were read, and written responses to the two questions were summarized and listed. It quickly became apparent that substantial overlap existed between the answers given to question 90 and those given to 111, so much so that a single list of coding categories for the two questions was eventually produced.

The frequency of the responses to the various coding categories and a discussion of their implications is presented in chapter 3; presented here is a further explanation of the rationale behind some of the coding categories.

1) ***Blank; "No comment"; "I have nothing to say."*** Two points need to be made here. First, blank is included as a separate coding category because it is, in fact, the most frequent response. If the common practice of considering blank as missing data and presenting response percentages as a function of those responding had been followed, the number of individuals holding particular opinions would have been grossly and indefensibly inflated. Second, it is true that writing "no comment" and leaving the line blank may be two very different responses; then again, they may not. Any attempt to draw differing conclusions or to pursue separate analyses, simply on

the basis of the difference in those two replies, seems of little value. And therein lies the guiding principal of generating coding categories. Any attempt to survey opinion and draw conclusions concerning the effectiveness of programs must begin by establishing meaningful analysis categories. The central question must be, do these two coding categories have different practical consequences This principle was used throughout the present effort in producing the coding categories used. It should also be noted that, if a respondent said "see question 90" in response to Q111, Q111 was coded as blank.

3) ***More open discussion; More teen concerns (sex, dating, abortion, drugs, suicide; Moral decision-making.*** Here again seems to be an over-broad, catch-all category, except for the fact that, in the surveys, these particular categories almost invariably co-occur; those who ask for more open discussion go on to list the "teen concerns" as the things that they want to discuss.

23) ***Other.*** This turned out to be a rather large category, for a number of good reasons. First, the survey was sent out to a wide variety of parishes that were offering a wide variety of religious education experiences: BASIC, RENEW, Serendipity, Confirmation preparation. Some of the comments were specific to those programs—that the age of Confirmation should be changed, that teenagers should be allowed to attend adult RENEW sessions, etc. Second, some of the responses put into this category seem specific but in fact are not: for example, "have the priest come in more often." What is it that "the priest" talked about Doctrine Social issues Teen issues Due to the difficulty in interpreting this response, it was placed in this category. Other content areas filed under "other" were:

- we should have more liturgies
- I liked (didn't like) filling out the survey
- make the classes longer, more frequent; have them meet at other times
- I wish more people would come to the classes

Lastly, some students spoke of particular interests (e.g., family concerns—I wish my dad could find a job), which either were not directly related to the questions or were too infrequent to create a separate coding category.

APPENDIX

E

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F

Participating Parishes

Holy Spirit Church
Huntsville, AL

Our Lady of Sorrows
Birmingham, AL

Christ the King
Little Rock, AR

St. Jude's Church
Jacksonville, AR

Our Lady of the Valley
Phoenix, AZ

St. Catherine of Sienna
Phoenix, AZ

Holy Family
Artesia, CA

Our Lady of Loretto
Navato, CA

Presentation Church
Sacramento, CA

St. Augustine
Pleasanton, CA

St. Clement
Hayward, CA

St. Elizabeth
Oakland, CA

St. Kevin's Church
San Francisco, CA

St. Matthew's Church
Corona, CA

St. Paul's Church
Fresno, CA

Christ the King
Evergreen, CO

St. John of the Cross
Middlebury, CT

St. Mary's Church
Putnam, CT

Holy Faith Church
Gainesville, FL

Corpus Christi
Miami, FL

St. Louis Church
Kendall, FL

Immaculate Conception
Cherokee, IA

St. Ann's Rel. Ed. Center.
Long Grove, IA

St. Anthony's Church
Knoxville, IA

St. Cecelia's Church
Algona, IA

St. Francis
Barclay, IA

St. Patrick's Church
Esterville, IA

St. Patrick's Church
Cedar Falls, IA

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
Darien, IL

Our Lady of the Brook
Northbrook, IL

Sacred Heart
Sterling, IL

Saint Cletus
La Grange, IL

St. Edward's Church
Rockford, IL

SS. Faith, Hope and Charity,
Winnetka, IL

St. Mary of Vernon
Mundelein, IL

St. Joseph's Church
Olney, IL

St. Margaret Mary
Naperville, IL

St. Patrick's Church
St. Charles, IL

St. Patrick's Church
McHenry, IL

St. Ferdinand
Ferdinand, IN

St. John's Church
Loogootee, IN

St. Joseph's Church
Evansville, IN

St. Mary's Church
Mitchell, IN

Church of the Epiphany
Louisville, KY

Holy Trinity
Louisville, KY

St. James
Elizabethtown, KY

St. Joseph's Church
Bardstown, KY

SS. Peter and Paul
Danville, KY

Corpus Christi
New Orleans, LA

Holy Cross
Lafayette, LA

Our Lady of the Rosary
Jeanerette, LA

Our Lady of Divine Providence*
Metairie, LA

Our Lady Queen of All Saints
Ville Platte, LA

St. Joseph the Worker
Marrero, LA

Holy Name
Springfield, MA

Saint Ambrose
Dorchester, MA

Saint Augustine's Church/
Andover, MA

St. Brigid's Church
Lexington, MA

Saint George's Church
Worcester, MA

St. John's Church
Swampscott, MA

Saint Mary's Church
North Grafton, MA

St. Peter's Church
Worcester, MA

St. Pius X Church
South Yarmouth, MA

St. Teresa's Church
Pittsfield, MA

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Crofton, MD

St. Mark's Church
Fallston, MD

St. Andrew's Church
Saginaw, MI

St. Anne's Church
Escanaba, MI

St. Mary's Church
Hemlock, MI

Coronation of Our Lady
Grandview, MO

Immaculate Conception
Brookfield, MO

Our Lady of Loretto Church
St. Louis, MO

St. Charles
Kansas City, MO

St. Columba Church
Conception Junction, MO

St. Mark's Church
Independence, MO

St. Pius X
Moberly, MO

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Crookston, MN

Church of St. Paul
St. Cloud, MN

Holy Rosary Cathedral
Duluth, MN

St. Luke's Church
St. Paul, MN

St. Odilia's Church
Shoreview, MN

Anaconda Catholic Community,
Anaconda, MT

St. Leo's Church
Lewistown, MT

St. Matthew's Church
Sidney, MT

St. Peter's Church
Wibaux, MT

Holy Trinity/Our Lady of Atonement
Kinston, NC

Shrine Infant of Prague/Holy Spirit
Jacksonville, NC

St. John Neumann
Charlotte, NC

St. Michael's Church
Gastonia, NC

St. Raphael's Church
Raleigh, NC

St. Agnes
Scottsbluff, NE

St. Leo's Church
Grand Island, NE

Our Lady of Mercy
Merrimack, NH

Immaculate Conception
Elizabeth, NJ

St. Catherine of Siena
Mountain Lakes, NJ

St. Elizabeth's Church
Wyckoff, NJ

St. Helen's Church
Westfield, NJ

St. Peter Celestine
Cherry Hill, NJ

Our Lady of Grace
Howard Beach, NY

St. Amelia's Church
Tonawanda, NY

St. Bonaventure
West Seneca, NY

St. Catherine of Siena
West Seneca, NY

St. Eugene's Church
Yonkers, NY

St. Joseph's Church
Troy, NY

St. Lucy's Church
Altamont, NY

St. Nicholas of Tolentine.
Jamaica, NY

St. Thomas the Apostle
Delmar, NY

Holy Family
Stow, OH

Holy Name Church
Cleveland, OH

St. Ignatius Loyola
Cincinnati, OH

St. John Vianney
Mentor, OH

St. Joseph's Church
Mantua, OH

St. Michael's Church
Canfield, OH

Assumption
Duncan, OK

St. Gregory the Great
Enid, OK

St. Mary's Church
Ponca City, OK

St. Matthew's Church
Elk City, OK

Christ the King
Ambridge, PA

Our Lady of Grace
Pittsburgh, PA

Sacred Heart
Royersford, PA

St. Anastasia
Newtown Square, PA

St. Catherine of Siena
Mt. Penn, Reading, PA

St. Francis of Assisi
Scranton, PA

St. Jane Frances de Chantal,
Easton, PA

St. John Neumann
Pittsburgh, PA

St. Joseph's Church
Orefield, PA

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Rapid City, SD

Sacred Heart
Yankton, SD

St. Martin's Church
Huron, SD

Holy Rosary Church
Memphis, TN

St. Ann Church
Memphis, TN

Our Mother of Mercy
Houston, TX

St. Joseph's Church
Edinburg, TX

St. Mary's Church
Fredericksburg, TX

St. Mary, Mother of the Church
Brownsville, TX

St. Theresa of Infant Jesus,
Premont, TX

St. Theresa's Church
Sugarland, TX

St. Vincent de Paul
Laredo, TX

St. Ambrose
Salt Lake City, UT

St. Francis Xavier
Kearns, UT

St. Joan of Arc
Yorktown, VA

Immaculate Conception
Clarksburg, WV

St. Margaret Mary's Church
Parkersburg, WV

Most Holy Redeemer
Two Rivers, WI

Newman Community
Eau Claire, WI

St. Bernard's Church
Appleton, WI

St. Bronislava
Plover, WI

St. Francis of Assisi
Coleman, WI

St. Gregory the Great
Milwaukee, WI

St. John Vianney
Brookfield, WI

St. Mark's Church
Rothschild, WI

St. Thomas More
Appleton, WI

N.B. Six of the parishes listed did not send in complete survey instruments.

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